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The Cult of the Black Cube

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Foreword

In his introduction to this book our author wastes no time in pinpointing a major issue that has bugged occultism and the Western magical traditions for centuries if not millennia:

> When I'm asked what particular spiritual tradition I follow, I often have to resist the urge to say "Saturnine Gnosis," because the experiences, rituals, and practices that I follow are ultimately connected to chthonic entities and their ruling Intelligence that fundamentally is not a good or kindly being, namely the Saturnine deity.

Indeed, the term 'Saturnine (or, more commonly: Saturn) Gnosis' shares its ambiguity with many if not most occult concepts and tags. Whereas, to the uninformed reader, its constituent elements ('Saturn,' 'Gnosis') may seem to be straightforward enough, any closer in-depth look will reveal multiple different layers of meaning, a good many of which appear to be downright contradictory, i.e. incompatible, with one another. This has made for a lot of bewilderment and occasionally bitter disputes within the various occult communities throughout the ages, with little effort being spent on analyzing the specific factors – philosophical, intellectual, societal, historical or, summarily, 'cultural' - governing and fundamentally informing this intrinsic equivocation.

Thus, many occultists: writers, readers, teachers, acolytes, and practitioners may be and indeed are aware that Saturn as a planetary deity symbolically stands for the 'guardian of the threshold' as is the case, for example, in classical astrology. However, this epithet does not easily and certainly not intuitively comply with equating Saturn to the salvific figures of Lucifer (more commonly a traditional denotation of the morning and/or evening star, i.e. Venus) and Prometheus, not to mention the contrarian and – to many – sinister character Satan, as a number of other schools and traditions are wont to do.

The Greek term *gnosis* in turn is generally translated as 'knowledge.' This, while technically accurate, omits to address the fact that what is typically implied by gnosis within a philosophical or metaphysical context is actually knowledge of a revelatory and salvific type that goes way beyond mere intellectual, cognitive ratiocination. Contrary to common parlance, where it may stand for basically any set of data and information (vide, for example, coder speak in information technology), in occultism it is imprinted by its reference to antique Gnosticism – an eminently ambiguous term in its own right whose definition has been and actually still is subject to ongoing furious academic debates for the better part of two centuries – longer, in fact, if you choose to factor in the early Church fathers' contention and propaganda concerning the Gnostics' purported 'hereticism.'

This ambiguity issue is nothing new, of course, and everyone who has devoted more than perfunctory attention to the history of occultism is basically aware of it. Introductory works dealing with occult disciplines ranging from alchemy and astral projection to astrology, from divination to geomancy, Enochian Aethyrs, the Kabbalah, ceremonial magic, sorcery and shamanism, from sex magic, sigil magic and success spells to talismantics, the Tarot, theurgy et cetera, to name but a representative selection, will usually explain the concept of symbols as inherently ambivalent markers ill-suited to simplistic one-size-fits-all interpretations.

Nevertheless, this theoretical consensus has done little to prevent acrid controversies between uncounted occultist factions over which particular exegesis and, by inference, day to day handling of any given set of symbols is the 'true' and 'legitimate' one. By way of a particularly illustrative case in

point let's take a brief look at the Coins of the Tarot deck and the elements that are commonly assigned to them. General consensus, widely accepted to this day and ranging back to the 19th century has it that, obviously being a symbolic representation of money, the Coins should be attributed to the element Earth. This reflects the Victorian rationale of material prosperity invariably culminating in the acquisition of 'safe' and 'stable' real estate ('property proper' as it were) – a fundamentally feudalist view of economic prowess hailing back to a predominantly agrarian, i.e. pre-industrial society.

Yet even as long ago as the 19th century, there was one notable prominent exception: in his seminal treatise *Le Tarot des Bohémiens, clef absolue des sciences occultes* [*Tarot of the Gypsies. The Absolute Key to the Occult Sciences*] of 1889 the Spanish born French occultist, former theosophist, Martinist, magician, author and court adviser to the Russian tsar, Papus (i.e. Gérard Analect Vincent Encausse, 1865-1916) assigns the element Air to the tarot's Coins. While he doesn't bother much with explaining this decision, it does appear to be more in accord with our contemporary post-industrial (and, arguably, even Marxist) view of money as a volatile abstraction characterized by an essential mobility and insubstantial flightiness. Whereas it may doubtlessly be deployed to purchase and maintain tangible immovables such as Earth-related real estate, landed property, landholdings and the like, money itself is, at least within the framework of this specific paradigm, an entity functionally distinguished by its ability to move about from one owner to the other. Only when it is being 'spent,' i.e. transitioned from one place to another, can it actually exert its power of facilitating commerce and exchange of goods and services. Precious metal based currency aside, money's 'value' is actually a consensually honored promise as issued by whoever holds the prerogative of coinage - which places it squarely in the elemental realm of Air. This, incidentally, is why, within a planetary correspondence context, money is traditionally allotted to Mercury.

Nor is this elemental assignment merely an abstract, academic conceit. In practical money spells, when conducting ceremonial magic in the Hermetic heritage – as, for example, in the Golden Dawn tradition – it makes all the difference whether your operative rituals and magical formulas are technically focused on money as governed by Earth or, alternatively, on money as relating

to Air. Indeed, most practitioners would argue that your results are bound to vary significantly, depending on which particular correspondence pairing you happen to opt for.

One might be tempted to argue that in hindsight Papus has proven to be the more astute and 'progressive,' 'modern' thinker by viewing money and its symbolic representation by the tarot's Coins in a manner that unhitches the previously dominant if not reactionary perspective of politico-economic power invariably being rooted in and legitimized by large-scale landed property. Certainly, in an age of post-industrial globalized cyber economy it makes little sense to tie the power of finance to an agrarian view of wealth and prosperity.

Note, however, that our point here is *not* about which of these two divergent views is the 'correct' one. Attempting to attain to such an absolute conclusion would in itself constitute an obsolete agenda no longer plausible within the context of contemporary postmodern relativism. Long gone are the days when incontrovertible absolute 'truths' were Western societies' common staple, regardless whether they were based in Aristotelian logic, fundamentalist religious convictions as promoted by Judaism and Christianity, in idolized secularist rationalism as celebrated by Age of Enlightenment philosophy and humanism, or, in the 19th and early to mid-20th century, by scientism, philosophical materialism and its positivist offshoots. Philosophy, anthropology, depth psychology, neurology, sociology, the cognitive sciences and last but not least quantum physics have done their part grinding away at the absolutist certainties of yore. Today, it is only religious fundamentalists, politically reactionary, revisionist minds and the educationally challenged who cannot come to terms with the domineering point of view that, philosophically as well as scientifically, 'reality' is no objective absolute but, rather, a narrational construct subject to a slew of factors of which supposedly objective 'facticity' however defined is a mere subset.

Why is this important to point out? Because embracing it will actually expand rather than limit the occult practitioner's options. This is essentially the attitude of Pragmatic and, to an extent, even Chaos Magic: don't waste precious time and effort on determining invariably contestable absolutes not

to mention provoking the ensuing overly theoretical metaphysical arguments and squabbling. Rather, if it works, simply make use of it! And be as flexible about things as you can: if, in your money spell, you need to focus on the tangible, material side of both money in general and the tarot Coins in particular, e.g. as in getting hold of a specific piece of real estate, by all means assign the element Earth to either of them. Looking for success in some Forex online day trading venture? Perhaps addressing matters via the elemental paradigm of Air may prove to be the more promising approach.

Saturn Gnosis is no exception and this book elucidates the issue in abundant, enlightening detail. The very title of Liz Greene's astrology classic *Saturn: A New Look at an Old Devil* (originally published in 1976) illustrates the inevitable ambiguity we will have to confront when addressing the mythological figure of Saturn and all it stands for. In classical astrology and its many iterations right until about the middle of the 20th century, Saturn is generally the indicator of famine, disease, misfortune, desolation, decrepitude, destitution and death, the folkloristic Grim Reaper's scythe constituting but a baleful echo of Saturn's notorious sickle. An archetypal *malefactor* if there ever was one – 'old devil' indeed. Saturn is, of course, the name the Romans assigned to the Greek Titan Kronos. Not a particularly nice fellow, certainly not a 'good and kindly being' by any standard – if in doubt, ask his father Uranus whom he emasculated with his scythe... The concatenation (likely facilitated by their respective names' similarity) of the Titan Kronos with the god Chronos who personified Time led to Saturn being rendered as 'Father Time' to the present day. And of course, Time as the 'devourer of life' isn't exactly regarded as the most jovial of cosmic cheer makers, either.

Yet, from a certain point (albeit not from very early on when they apparently still focused on his maleficent aspects) the Romans revered and worshipped Saturnus as a benign deity in charge of agriculture, fertility, nourishment and prosperity. According to Ovid and Hesiod, he even presided over the mythical Golden Age when all was well with the world and its human denizens. The Capitoline Hill was originally referred to as *Saturnius mons* and the god was also in charge of the all-important state treasury. Rome's most popular annual festival, the Saturnalia, was decidedly an extended period of making merry, of

present-giving and playful social role reversals - in modern Western cultural terms we might well compare it to a mix of Carnival and Christmas festivities.

In summary, Saturn also enjoyed devotion and reverence as a prime divine *benefactor*. One and the same entity, viewed as both the incorporation of evil events, depression and destruction and as the source of wholesome abundance, well-being and revelry – it doesn't get more contradictory than that.

Yet ours is not merely a question of "seeing both sides of the medal" or balancing the Yin with the Yang. Finagle it philosophically as much as you will: what we are actually dealing with here is something very much alien to our purportedly clear cut, assertedly rational view of a one-truth-only-world as conveyed to us by Aristotle and his successors. We are, in fact, dealing with the *Power of the Paradox*. Mythical reality is never (and neither is life itself) as unequivocal and unambiguous as mainstream human endeavor would like to paint it. Gnosis as an applied and manifest knowledge of life and life technology will always focus not on "resolving" the obviously prevalent contradictions informing the world but, rather, on handling them in a meaningful constructive manner: practice rather than dogma, palpable experience in lieu of abstract faith or merely theoretical surmise are its mainstay. If nothing else, this is what the Gnostics of Antiquity and the medieval mystics and kabbalists have taught us, as did the Indian sages in Vedic times and the Buddhist masters: if we truly want to come to grips with the world as is, we have no choice but to embrace its paradoxical nature and forge it into a viable weapon to best the vagaries of life.

The German *Fraternitas Saturni* (FS) is unquestionably the oldest and most influential magical order extant focused on Saturn Gnosis. Thus, it seems reasonable to assume that it may know a thing or two about the subject. The FS holds antique Gnosticism in high esteem and has even devoted one of its working (as in contrast to honorary) degrees, the 25° *Magister Gnosticus* to the investigation and pursuit of gnosis. What many beginners find confusing, however, is that while antique Gnosticism viewed the "Demiurge" as a malevolent or, at best, ignorant entity which the Gnostics opposed in any which way, in its core rituals Saturn is addressed as the "Great Demiurge" in a decidedly positive, respectful manner. How can this be? Isn't this a fundamental contradiction in dire need of resolution?

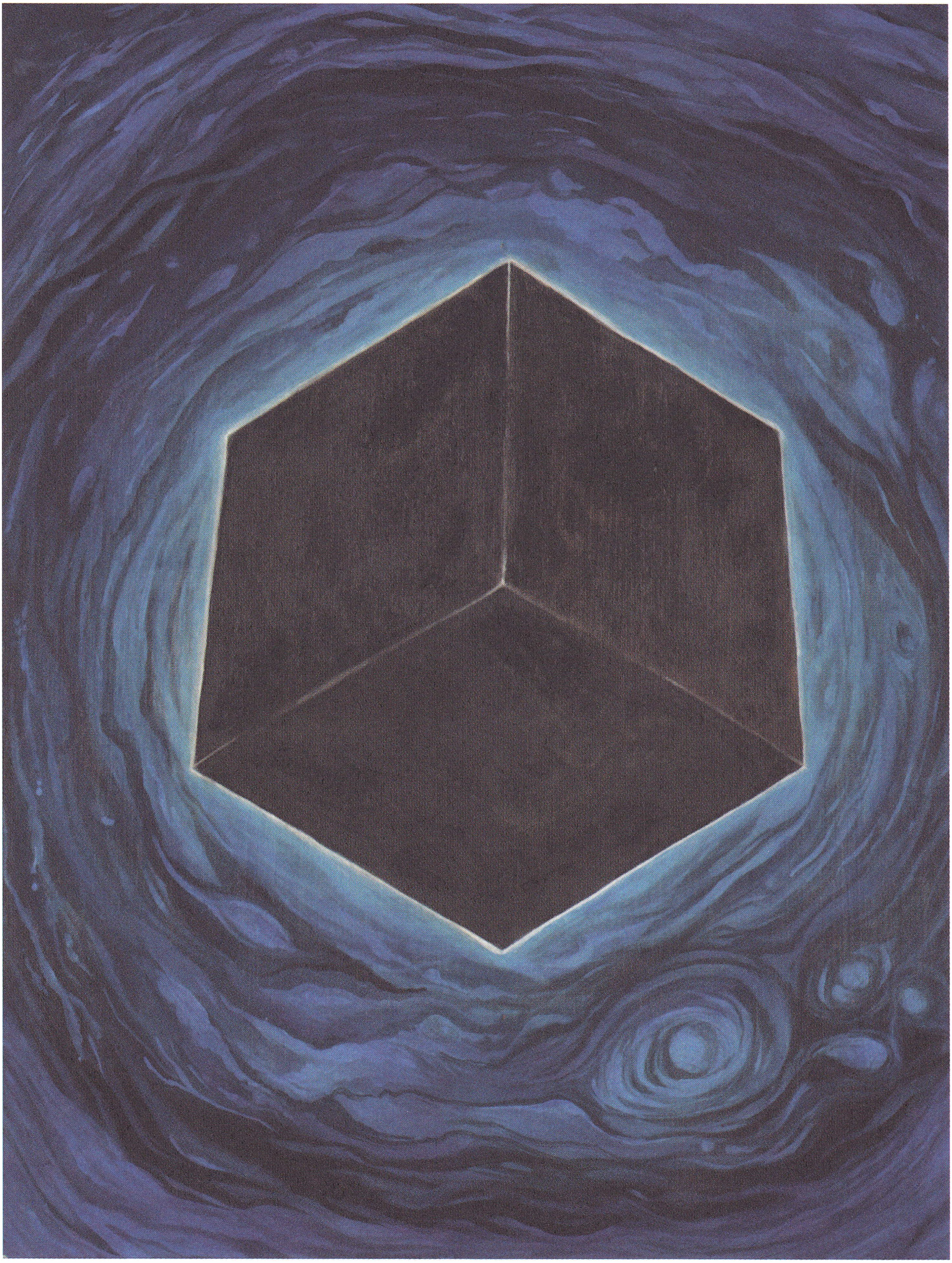
Again, we are confronted with an ambiguity of terms that reflects the paradoxical – or dare we say holistic? – narrative occultists in general and magicians in particular are bound to resort to and *handle* (rather than "resolve") when dealing with the vast spectrum of tools a plethora of occult traditions have bequeathed to us. Obviously, in Plato's *Timaeus* (appr. 360 BC) the Demiurge as a universal artisan, master builder or fashioner, albeit essentially a secondary, executory force, is an entity viewed as a great benefactor. After Plato, both the Middle Platonic as well as the Neoplatonic schools of philosophy, while merrily expounding on it, were entirely happy with the notion, too. As, incidentally, are today's Freemasons, never mind the fact that they may not technically employ the term "demiurge" itself any longer, having replaced it with "Great Architect [of the Universe]". The fundamental concept is still the same.

It was the antique Gnostics who converted the expression in a pejorative manner to denote a lesser being or archon whose various – distinctly unfavorable - appellations include Ialdabaoth, Saklas ("fool"), Samael ("blind god") etc. Here we find the Demiurge being described as a malevolent, stupid, blind, haughty, callous, egotistical if not unredeemable "failed god", given which it is the Gnostic's prime task to unmask him for what he is and to escape from his profane clutches. This is part and parcel of the Gnostics' dualist anti-cosmic tenet that the world constitutes the dungeon of the nous or the "divine spark" that needs liberation. Viewed from this perspective, Saturn Gnosis is actually quite aware of those less than benevolent "chthonic entities and their ruling Intelligence" mentioned above.

Again, there is no necessity whatsoever to subscribe to *either* the one or the other view to the exclusion of its respective counterpart. Rather, we would be well-advised to handle them all in accordance with the English sorcerer Austin Osman Spare's sober counsel that belief is but a technology which is why magicians should select their beliefs just as surgeons will select their tools – whatever is best suited to achieve any given goal is always the instrument or belief of choice.

This book is an excellent resource to fill your metaphysical and philosophical arsenal with a multitude of such tools that will help empower you.

UBIQUE ∴ DAEMON ∴ UBIQUE ∴ DEUS ∴



The Cult of the Black Cube

Ultima Cumaei venit iam carminis aetas;
Magnus ab integro saeclorum nascitur ordo.
iam redit et Virgo, ***redeunt Saturnia regna,***
iam nova progenies caelo demittitur alto.

Now comes the final era of the Sibyl's song;
The new world order is born.
And now justice returns, **Saturn's reign returns,**
Now a new lineage is sent down from high heaven.

Introduction (An Anecdote)

This book is going to explain some concepts which my friends and colleagues warn me might sound very bleak to first time readers. That's a very fair assessment. When I'm asked what particular spiritual tradition I follow, I often have to resist the urge to say 'Saturnine Gnosis', because the experiences, rituals, and practices that I follow are ultimately connected to chthonic entities and their ruling Intelligence that fundamentally is not a good or kindly being, namely the Saturnine deity. Explaining myself or my views and practices is often more trouble than it's worth, and frankly, for years I didn't feel any inclination to codify or share them with anyone else. However, in the last several years, a series of events, coincidences, and synchronicities have run together in such a way that I believe that the Saturnine deity wishes these things to be shared, and so I'm going to try to relate a series of occult teachings and techniques, gathered from over 20 years of serious academic and esoteric research. Since we're going to be spending some time together, I want to tell you a little about myself, and why this book came to be written by me.

When I was in my senior year of high school, I was in a car accident that damaged my spine and crippled me in my right leg. X-rays showed that the section of my spine which connected to my hips – the coccyx – had been nearly destroyed. I was in terrible, constant pain, which stayed with me throughout daylight hours, and made it nearly impossible to sleep, study, or even move

without considerable medication. Sitting was agony, and the damage to my spine had caused a loss of control over one of my legs, so I could only hobble around school with the use of a cane. This damage lasted for several years. The medical system was good and efficient, but none of the treatments worked, and my spinal specialist was concerned that surgery had a good chance of damaging the nerves further, and could lead to total paralysis below the waist. I spent months in physiotherapy, then chiropractic – I even tried yoga. None of these helped, and my doctors were forced to prescribe increasingly large doses of opiates to dull the constant pain in my back and legs. That alone was almost as great a danger as the nerve damage, because opiates are highly addictive, and this was at a time when painkiller addiction was not yet recognized as the serious issue that it is today. I was 18 years old, and walking with a cane, but the real issue was the vacillation between extremes of pain from the spinal damage or the foggy vagueness of morphine.

This miserable state of affairs lasted until I was midway through my undergraduate studies. To be honest, I'm not entirely sure how I even got into university, as I was so heavily medicated that I couldn't drive, and often slurred my words. On the other hand, I really liked the process of learning, and university offered the possibility of discovering the unknown.

My undergraduate studies were initially in Humanities, and I took a lot of courses in different disciplines to see what I might want to do as a career. The university was medium sized and had decent course offerings across a range of disciplines, and so I was able to try psychology and philosophy, together with Latin, and religious studies. I thoroughly enjoyed religious studies, because the department of religion was going through a generational transition, which resulted in many of the faculty being specialists in 'new' fields like paganism and esoterica. They offered courses on 'Death and Dying', 'Magic and the Occult', and 'Ancient Myths and Semiotics', none of which had been offered a decade prior.

On a whim, I signed up for the course on 'Magic and the Occult'; I think because I needed an elective, it fit my timetable, and it seemed interesting. So I limped to class, and it turned out that the instructor was actually quite good, and seemed to have what even today I would call an excellent non-specialist's

grasp of the subject matter. Just to be clear, I don't believe that someone needs to be a magician in order to research magic, because there are some excellent researchers who work on supernatural phenomena without trying to create them. This was one such teacher, and so we had very interesting discussions about the history of magic, magic in the ancient world, the mechanics of spells and ceremonies, and basic demonology. As you can see, I still remember the course well, and since I was drugged into a nearly constant coma, that suggests that it was a course well taught.

As the middle of the term neared, the instructor reminded us that as per the syllabus, we would not have a final exam, but instead a research project. I decided to do my essay on the concept of Black Magic in Antiquity, mainly because I was a fan of the 'Conan' movies with Arnold Schwarzenegger, and the whole 'ancient sorcerer' motif that was prevalent in that genre. So I spent a few days in the university library, digging into different texts on necromancy, black magic, curses, demons, and materials of that sort. It was very interesting to see what was available back then, and I must say that our library had a surprisingly decent collection of books and journals on those subjects, especially given that it wasn't a huge university. I can only assume that the faculty themselves were very active in research, which would have justified the sizable collection of materials on those subjects.

I was poring through one of the French monographs on la *nigromantie romaine* (Roman necromancy) when I came across a particular ceremony that was designed to placate the chthonic gods in exchange for favors. It was, if you know anything about Roman religion, a very typically Latin idea: *do ut des*, meaning, 'I give so that You [the deity] will give.' The ceremony was rather complex, and it seemed to be based partially on the chthonic ritual celebrated by Aeneas in the *Aeneid*, in which a ditch is dug so that black-colored animals can be sacrificed and have their blood flow down into the earth. Reading it, I felt a strange sense that maybe these practices were not simply superstition. The ancients were not stupid people, and you absolutely cannot visit Egypt or Italy or India and think that the great monuments were built by morons. Magical ceremonies were incredibly costly to perform, and people do not *repeatedly* spend large amounts of money on practices that generate no results.

In all of the ancient cultures, magicians were professionals, with clientele just as respectable as a doctor or lawyer might envy. With this in mind, I found myself contemplating the possibility of trying some modernized version of the ritual to the chthonic gods.

To be clear, I'm not saying that I believed in magic necessarily, but I was in a kind of pain that can only be described as transformative. Everything around me was visible only through a red haze, and I was losing my ability to function in any productive way. Through the different courses I was taking, though, I was hearing intelligent, articulate instructors discussing magic as an actual force that could be studied, tested, and used to real effect. It's not that those teachers were (all) claiming to be magicians, but that they would frequently describe having observed some otherwise unexplainable phenomena while staying with Native American medicine men, African witchdoctors, or Sufi masters. They didn't sugar coat it either – and this stayed with me – they all made a point of saying that magic was a force that tended to scar the people who used it, and that those who contact the spirit world tended to be sick or damaged individuals. This even has an academic name: 'the Shamanic illness,' because most cultures that have shamans believe that the spirits contact the potential shaman during some terrible sickness, or after an accident of some kind. In any event, given the kind of education that I'd been fortunate to get, and since I had exhausted all the conventional medical options, I was willing to try anything.

You might wonder: why approach the chthonic gods? The answer is simply that I have always felt a natural resonance with chthonic energies. It's not that I liked serial killers or war zones, but in the mythology classes that I took, I was definitely drawn to the more savage and monstrous elements – it wasn't a rational liking, it was just instinctive. Furthermore, when you actually study the Hellenistic or Hermetic magical traditions, there is a definite sense that there is a cosmic order which cannot or should not normally be overturned. If you're injured and broken, you're supposed to consult a doctor or a priest, you don't turn to magic unless you're willing to incur serious debt to powerful gods or spirits. That may not be the way magic is discussed today, but that was

very much how it was presented in the various textbooks available to me at the time.

I did my research. I had taken Latin, and I was able to reconstruct a basic ritual that ought to have put me in touch with the *Di Manes,* the ghost-gods of the Roman netherworld. This seemed like a wise direction to go in, because I knew for a fact that I have Roman ancestry, and in theory my ancestors must have sacrificed to these entities for centuries. As a blood descendant of some presumable pious Romans, it made sense to approach those same entities and ask for their help. I understood that magic involves trade, and so I was prepared to offer virtually whatever they asked for.

The night of the ritual came, and I had prepared very carefully. The ritual text itself was in Latin, and I had relied partially on John Gager's *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells* for some of the passages. The altar had offerings of wine, water, bread, and other gifts that seemed representative of the traditional things that a Roman chthonic entity might want. As I did not have a funeral pit to pour them into, I had procured a glass bowl to receive the offerings. I myself had a toga, and I knew enough to cover my head to show humility to the deities. I began the ritual in the dark, except for a few candles to give enough light to see the text. It was just the beginning of Fall, and so the house was relatively warm. I recited the litany, and began to pour the offerings of wine, then water, then bread. Using a knife, I then cut my left hand and allowed the blood to trickle down my fingers and into the cauldron.

That particular act was probably one of the most significant of my life.

Things began to change when the blood entered the cauldron. The temperature in the room dropped sharply, and the candles dimmed. The flames themselves didn't flicker, but their light became so weak that the darkness of the room was really oppressive. I became aware that I was not alone – I could feel the presence of multiple spirits in the room with me, and they did not at all feel friendly. I'd assumed that since I was drawing on ancestral gods and freely offering my own blood that whatever showed up would be friendly. Stupidly, I had not imagined that whatever came would be malevolent or just angry at being disturbed.

Then the glass cauldron exploded. It didn't crack, it literally detonated into tiny glass fragments. I felt real fear, because I didn't know what to do at that point. It became hard to breathe, as if some force was crushing my chest. My carefully planned Latin broke down, and I could only pray audibly in my native French to those spirits to forgive me for having disturbed their slumber. I was afraid to move, because the floor was in darkness, and there were tiny glass shards everywhere.

Eventually, maybe after ten or fifteen minutes, the malevolent presence in the room faded away. The room became warmer and brighter, and I felt that it was safe enough to limp across the room and turn on the lights. I cut my feet on the glass, of course, because I had been barefoot. I cleaned up the mess, regretted having tried the ritual in the first place, and promised myself I'd never dabble in black magic again.

Two or three nights later, I had a lucid dream. It was unique, I'll never forget it. Always I have hated trying to describe this dream, because it was a genuinely sacred experience, but I am convinced that the rest of the book will simply not make sense if I don't share the core aspects of it.

I appeared on a mountain in this really strange place, mostly desert, and the colors were all wrong, namely that the sky and sands were all hues of red and orange that are not possible on earth. There was a sense of hostility toward life in that place. But I did not really pay much attention to the surroundings, because there was this gigantic pulsing black energy mass before me. It occasionally rippled with color in the same way that black petroleum can have a rainbow sheen on its oily surface, and you know that the color is not the petrol, it's just the light glancing off it. The black energy spoke to me by projecting words into my head, I didn't question the mechanism at the time. In essence, it said that my ritual had gotten its attention, and that it had decided to bring me to its world. The deity offered me a choice. First, it said that I could return to my normal life, and expect to live in the same continued pain and misery that had compelled me to try something as desperate as dabbling in black magic. But alternately, it said that it could fix me, stitch my damaged spine back together, and completely devour the trauma. The deity said that it would do more than this – it would set me on a different path than fate had intended,

where I would go interesting places, learn to do strange things, and have a generally very exciting life. In return, I would serve as one of its messengers in this world, carrying its essence with me, running through the damaged tissues of my body. My own agendas and ambitions would come second, because nothing in life is free, and certainly not miracles.

Well, I wanted to experience the miraculous, so I accepted its generous offer without blinking. Right there and then, I felt its energy pour into me, like ice water in my veins. I felt its essence crawling into my spine, like the steroid injections I'd had, working its way between the cracked vertebrae. It hurt a great deal, and then I woke up.

I'll keep this short: within a week, the pain in my spine was gone. In two weeks, I didn't need the cane to walk anymore, and within a month I no longer needed any of the staggering amount of medication that had previously allowed me to function. My doctors had absolutely no explanation for the healing, and they called it (you can rightly imagine) a miracle case.

It would be exciting to say that I began to receive razor-clear gnosis or directions, but that's not at all how things worked for me. It communicated with me through nudges, surges of intuitions, and a lot of unusual synchronicity. Eventually, when I was ready, the deity finally allowed me to see it as Saturn, the Black Cube, the Lord of Time. It didn't ever seem to give me any work, but it did force me into graduate school, and eventually into a doctorate program in mythology at an Ivy League school. I have been studying the various cults of Saturn, in His many cultural guises and manifestations ever since.

You might be interested to know that it has not been a solitary road. Along the way, I have met a number of figures whom I studied with for a time. Each, in their own way, was and is a deeply devoted adept of the Saturnine deity. Some of them are very public figures, and it would surprise you if you knew that they were devotees of Saturn. Others have proven to be allies who (I was shocked) have had similar experiences, and wandered on other equally or more bizarre Saturnine quests.

Twenty-five years later, I have to say that the deity held up every part of its agreement. Those years of study and practice have paid off, and I now enjoy a level of privacy and comfort that many of my academic colleagues would envy.

Nevertheless, in the last year, the deity called Saturn has made it clear to me (though I was reluctant) that it is finally time to write. I had discussed this initially with my friend David Beth, who encouraged me in this direction.

I don't like writing about the occult for two reasons. One, because it feels wrong to share secrets and insights so freely with strangers. Since I had to work hard for over two decades, suffer, travel, and starve in order to get this knowledge, why would I put it in a book for other people? Second, and more importantly, because these practices, this knowledge, is deeply personal and sacred; And often this knowledge and the experiences derived from Saturnian contact are intimate beyond conceptualization. There is a great danger that any attempt made to convey conceptually what is basically beyond conceptualization is bound to fail or at least is in danger to be either inadequate or misunderstood. I do not want this to happen at all, and so if it were up to me, I just would not write this book at all. Yet as I said above, some decisions are not mine to make, and so I hope that you will prove an understanding and attentive audience.

This book is written for the Saturnine deity, in hopes that you too will find something special here. This book does offer secrets, gleaned from years of study. It shows rites and practices that are likely thousands of years old, yet which remain viable and potent today. Finally, this book can help you to see the incredible intricacies to which this deity is at work in the world, in many cultures and enterprises. Through this book, I hope, you will find your own way to the Saturnine deity, and what happens when you reach that point is up to you. Of course, even Saturn is himself a manifestation of an even greater continuum – that is, Chaos – but we will get to that in time. In any case, if somehow this book is useful in your own spiritual quest for the gnosis that leads to primordial Chaos, then I will count my efforts well rewarded.

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Overview

This book presents an overview into the worship and gnosis of the Saturnine deity, sometimes called the Black Sun or the Black Cube, a unique entity that has been venerated by many cultures for thousands of years. It is intended primarily to be used by practicing occultists, but is designed to be accessible also to insightful readers of other backgrounds. For the purposes of nomenclature, this work refers to the god as 'the Saturnine deity' rather than Saturn, primarily because 'Saturn' is merely the Roman name for an entity that transcends the limitations of Italic mythology. Names are important, to be sure, but in the case of a deity that has multiple names, it may be better to avoid naming it consistently after a single cultural norm. As the author of *The Picatrix* makes plain, Him which someone calls 'Saturn,' another may call 'Cronos,' 'Śani,' 'Samedi,' 'Keyvan,' 'Tezcatlipoca,' or even 'the Black Cube.' This deity has been treated by various authors from their own unique cultural perspective. For example, the reader may be aware of *The Greatness of Saturn* by Robert Svoboda. Other authors have addressed the Saturnine deity indirectly, or included Him among other deities, as in the case of (Pseudo) Al-Majriti's *Ghayat al Hakim*, the translation of which is better known in the West as the above-mentioned *Picatrix*. Nevertheless, if one accepts for a moment that the occult addresses actual deities which themselves transcend cultural boundaries, then one must acknowledge that a culture-specific approach might (or indeed, *must*) have limitations that are the result of a culture's bias.

One of the most interesting occult exercises is the tracing of the Saturn cult throughout the various cultures of the ancient world. This exercise is significant for several reasons. First, having studied five or six different ancient religious systems, it becomes clear that there are very few deities that are truly international, insofar as maintaining their distinct traits across the cultural lines. Saturn is one of the rare few who appears in multiple cultures with the same essential characteristics. Here one might ask if all solar deities aren't generic – and the answer would be definitively 'no.' The Roman, Aztec, and Egyptian solar deities (for example) share almost nothing in common except for the obvious attribute of the shining disk. One might equally ask if oceanic deities are not all more or less the same, and the answer there is again 'no,' they tend to be relatively unique apart from their connection to water. In any case, these aforementioned deities are tied to visible natural phenomena, and so one would expect them to have common traits, since the observation of the phenomena is not related to one's culture. When a deity or entity which represents more abstract concepts appears to carry those traits consistently across the cultural lines, it raises some very interesting questions of how and why the culture reveres that deity. In our modern esoteric culture we unfortunately very often find 'practitioners' insisting that a figure like Lilith is equivalent and non-different from Hecate and Kali, because they are female deities with a dark side. This is an incredibly poor (and dangerous) reduction of complex cultural figures and symbols. One must be careful not to simply 'lump together' different deities that share a certain vague portfolio of attributes, but not distinguishing stories or features. This book, however, will demonstrate that the Saturnine deity is not merely a series of similar gods, but rather the same entity which is recognized and venerated/placated by multiple religions and occult systems.

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This work presents its content across three thematic sections:

- **Scholarly Materials.** There is a great deal of ancient, medieval, and modern texts that deal with the mythology, worship, and veneration of Saturn across a wide range of cultures. Predominate cultures covered will include: Classical (Greco-Roman), Islamic, and Indian, with references to Aztec and Afro-Caribbean spirituality where appropriate. This section of the book investigates the way scholars and specialists understand the way various cultures perceived and experienced the divine mandate and cosmic function of Saturn. A selected annotated bibliography which provides a discussion of sources for people who wish to carry out their own independent investigations can be found at the end of the book.

- **Saturnine Theory.** This section investigates general discussions of magic, and gnosis, together with personal views and knowledge gained through direct transmission from mentors (human and inhuman) about the Saturnine deity. It includes observations and speculations about the global cult of Saturn in its many forms. Where the scholarly section is backed by hard facts and academic sources, this section is more gnostic, interpretive, and anecdotal than the prior one, but equally significant in terms of the information presented.

- **Saturnine Practices.** The contemporary cultist of Saturn has a very wide range of historical practices from which to choose. This section explores various basic and advanced devotions and rites, for those who wish to engage directly with the Black Cube and its chthonic energies. It also discusses some facets of contemporary occult practice, such as the role of sacrifice, the mechanics of Saturnine magic, and the ultimate goal of the practice of magic.

Section One

Scholarly Materials on Saturn

Saturn in Islamic Texts

Medieval Islamic cosmology, like the Indian and Hermetic cosmologies from which it borrows, considers that the seven planets of the solar system are not mere geological masses, but physical representations of celestial intelligences or powers. These seven planetary powers hold considerable influence over the day-to-day affairs of humanity and indeed all earthly life. Consequently, the serious student of celestial philosophy (read: magic) is able to gain some hold over these beings, and thereby improve his lot on earth, or alter the course of natural events for another person, issue, or region.

In medieval Islamic esoterica, the figure of Saturn is a surprisingly popular figure. The Arabic word for the Saturnine deity is *Zuhal,* which means 'the one who is far away', or 'the alien.' While many familiar with Hermetic thought might like to claim that this concept of 'distance' or 'being alien' is borrowed from Greek thought, it has been definitively stated that 'Zuhal' was the Arabic name for Saturn long before the Arabs or Jews had become familiar with Greek learning.[1]

1 "This etymology clearly postdates the knowledge among Arabic writers of Greek cosmology, for whom Saturn is the farthermost planet in the cosmos; it would have made little sense within the context of the limited astronomy of the pre-Islamic Arabs." See Hartner-[F.J. Ragep], "Zuḥal", in: Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C. E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W. P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 18 August 2016 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_8194>.

As Islam lacks any outright 'Satanic' current, and its antinomian traditions are much more 'Right Hand Path'[2] than many would like to admit, the author would suggest that the cult of Zuhal took the role that Satanism came to fill in medieval Christianity. The Saturnine deity becomes the champion of the desperate, the greedy, the rebel, and the vengeance-driven. It is highly significant that Zuhal appears in multiple Islamic manuscripts, and that the details of the cult of Zuhal appear to have been well known to Arab authors not as history, but as actual practices which 'other Arabs' were practicing well into the medieval period. Zuhal was not dimly remembered like some historical Quraysh deity such as Allat or Hubal, but was instead held to be an entity to which actual sections of the Quran were dedicated, and to whom considerable power of fate was attributed. This tension is not ignored by the authors of the various esoteric manuscripts, and so the compilers of *The Picatrix* and *Nabataean Agriculture* somewhat awkwardly try to turn the planet Saturn into some sort of angelic intelligence, in the hopes of making its cult more palatable to devout Muslim readers.

The various manuscripts insist, on the one hand, that Saturn is unique in that where the other planets have their own area of authority, Saturn's authority is over the planets themselves, and so the devotee of Saturn has the advantage of not only being able to appeal to Zuhal's own portfolio (discussed below), but also the possibility of using Zuhal's influence to overrule the other planetary powers.

When examining the Islamic view of the Saturnine deity, one would do well to consider the source texts. One of the cardinal rules of any textual analysis is that when authors mean something, they'll repeat themselves. So in scanning this text, we will look first for repetition, not word order, and terms that are

2 By the term 'Right Hand Path,' the author refers to a spiritual tradition that is in keeping with the orthodox norms and taboos of a given religion, in this case of Islam. Most forms of Sufism (for example) would fall under this definition, as they encourage a strict adherence to normative Islam. By 'Left Hand Path,' the author refers to those spiritual traditions which deliberately ignore or even violate orthodox norms and taboos of a given religion. This is rare in textual or folk Islam, though some specialists argue that such Sufi groups as the Malamatiyya make use of taboo violation as a kind of shaming exercise that shocks the ego into submission.

repeated will be flagged in bold. Since the text is in translation, it is reasonable to consider synonymic repetition as valid. As the oldest of the primary texts considered in this section, it would be wise to consider the words of Ibn Wahshiyya's treatise *Nabataean Agriculture*. Ibn Wahshiyya writes of Zuhal:

> Beware the **evil** of this god when He is angered or to the west of the Sun or veiled in its rays in the middle of its return. Pray to Him this **prayer** which we have just given here. While you are praying this **prayer**, give a burnt offering to His idol consisting of old hides, grease, strips of leather and dead bats. Burn for Him fourteen dead bats and an equal amount of rats. Then take their ashes and prostrate yourself on them in front of His idol. Prostrate yourselves to Him [in the form of] a **black stone** on **black sand** and seek refuge from Him against his **evil,** because O my brethren and beloved ones, He is the cause of the perishing of all that perishes, the cause of decay of all that decays, the cause of perdition of all that is destroyed, the cause of sorrow of all the sorrowful ones, and the weeping of all the weeping ones. He is the Lord of **evil** and sin and filth and dirt and poverty.
>
> This is what He does to men when He is **angered,** but when He is content then He gives them existence, long life, fame after their death, acceptance in the eyes of those who look at them and sweetness of speech. His **anger** is to be [feared] in situations like I just described to you, but his contentment is to be expected when He is east of the Sun or in the middle of His course or in places which agree with His actions or in the full speed of His travel or in the cycle of His ascendance.
>
> If you **pray** to Him when He is **angered,** repeat your **prayer** and the sacrifice when He is content and remind Him of the earlier **prayer** and repeat it to Him so that you might escape his **evil.**[3]

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3 Following the edition of Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila. *The Last Pagans of Iraq: Ibn Waḥshiyya and His Nabatean Agriculture. Islamic History and Civilization,* v. 63 (Leiden: Brill. 2006), p. 153. This edition is hereafter referred to as *Nabataean Agriculture.*

The text continues, but let us pause here momentarily. The text repeats such terms as 'evil,' 'anger,' 'prayer,' 'black.' These are not accidental repetitions, as the author is trying to stress the nature of the deity. Zuhal is connected with 'evil,' and is a power that can experience the emotional state that humans consider 'anger.' This suggests two things: first, that Zuhal has emotions as a human and thus we can relate to Him on some level; second, that the deity is aware of human action and reacts to it. Further, the text repeats the verb 'pray' and the noun 'prayer' several times, which indicates that it is possible to communicate with this remote being, not as an equal, but as something greater. We also see, for the first time, the reference to the veneration of Saturn using a black stone to represent him. The examination of the repetition concluded, it is good now to see what terms remain.

As a reminder, these words of Ibn Wahshiyya follow a traditional incantation to Zuhal. The text leaves no room for misunderstanding, as he clearly identifies Zuhal as the source of evil, decay, destruction, sorrow, and uncleanness. Ibn Wahshiyya expresses concern that Zuhal has a vindictive personality and a bad temper. Even the offerings to Zuhal are foul and uncouth – rather than gold or incense, He is to be offered 'old hides, grease, strips of leather and dead bats.' It is important to note while hides, grease, and leather are rather low quality goods, the dead bats are actually carrion, that is filth *(najasa)* in Islamic law, and so the offering of such to a spirit indicates that his character is sharply different from any of the angelic spirits attributed to the other planets, such as Jupiter or Venus. This places the spirit of Zuhal closer in resonance to the terrestrial jinn, which are said to be attracted to the dead, filth, and spilled blood. It is difficult to stress this in the English language, but the use of carrion is a tremendous taboo in Islam – even handling it necessitates ablutions in some schools of jurisprudence. Any mainstream Muslim reading this invocation would be justifiably shocked to see that one would offer dead bats to Zuhal. Ibn Wahshiyya continues:

> Know that He is the one who gives success in cultivation of the earth and growth or its opposite to plants; He revealed to the Moon what I put down in this book of mine and the Moon revealed it to His idol, and

I was taught it by the idol of the Moon just like I now teach it to you. Preserve this because it is your life on which you rely and on it depends the growth of your fields and your fruits which are the matter of your life and your hope, during your lifetime, of comfort, affluence, safety, and complete health.

Know that I have prayed to this god, Saturn, and in my prayer I have asked His idol to benefit with this book of mine everyone who reads it. The idol revealed to me: 'Your prayer has been heard and your offering accepted.' I did this because I felt sorry for the sons of my kind because of the anguish of their poverty and the abundance of their misery. [*Nabataean Agriculture*, p. 151]

This section is very significant, because the author admits that he has personally tried this particular spell, praying to a black stone idol, and that Zuhal has directly spoken to him through the black stone. The term 'black stone' is deliberately evocative of the black stone in Mecca embedded in the Kaaba. As an educated Arab who uses Islamic language, Ibn Wahshiyya is deliberately pushing the envelope.

The Saturnine deity can be further understood through some of the prayers directed towards it. Ibn Wahshiyya's *Nabataean Agriculture* records a prayer to Zuhal, which the *Picatrix* compiler both cites and includes in its entirety, indicating that it was considered highly effective. The text is slightly strange, as it wanders between the second person ('you') and the third person ('he'), but this style is likely in imitation of the Quran which uses similar shifts of person. This spell will be discussed further below in the Third Section as a contemporary magical operation. Yet for the moment, it is good to note some of the characteristics of the deity which the spell outlines. The text reads:

Oh Saturn, we address ourselves to You, standing, we ask and we honor You with obedience and humility; we address You, standing and facing the exalted master, alive and **eternal,** solid in His **power** and **dominion.** He is **eternal** in his heaven and mighty in his **dominion,** focused in His

> efforts and His great works. He is over all, His **power** is over all living things on earth, and they endure by His **endurance**. By His **power** and His might He began them, and He causes them to continue; He causes us to **endure,** and by His eternity and perpetuity, He brings permanence on earth. By His might, He causes the waters to ebb and flow. **Living**, He causes **life** to move, because He is himself alive.
>
> He is cold, as is His nature. Through the influence of His high realm, the trees grow, and the earth becomes **heavy** under the **weight** of His movements; if He wishes, He causes beings to become what they are not. Yet He is wise and a creator by His might and intelligence; His knowing extends to all things.

The text is lengthy, so it is good to pause again here for analysis. As we said above, the cardinal rule of any textual analysis is that when authors mean something, they'll repeat themselves. With this in mind, we note the repetition of the terms 'eternal,' 'power,' 'endure,' and 'heavy/weight.' These suggest a deity that is seen to be *timeless* or to have *power over the course of time*. It is good to indicate here that these are not terms that are used of the other six planetary gods, and since clearly those gods are quite ancient, we understand that Saturn is 'ancient' in a truly cosmic sense. There are other significant terms here, but we will continue the review looking for repetition. We can return now to the text to see what terms are repeated:

> Hail, lord of the heavens, may Your name be holy, pure and honored. We obey You; we address ourselves to Your **ancientness,** we call You by Your names, Your **ancientness,** Your nobility and honor. We demand from You whom we respect to strengthen our mind, that it be strong and **enduring** and dwell in us while we live. Then when we die, ward off the worms and reptiles from our flesh. You are a merciful and **ancient** teacher, and no one can save the one You condemn. You are persistent in Your words and deeds, and You regret not Your acts. You are slow and profound in Your powers. You are a master whose deeds cannot

> be undone, and what You forbid cannot be done by another. You are respected in all Your actions and unique in Your kingdom. You are the lord of the other planets, and the very stars fear the sound of Your movement and tremble before Your gaze.
>
> We ask and demand You to avert Your **evil** from us, and in Your purity, to treat us well. By Your good and noble names, we avert Your **evil,** and we draw from Your virtue. By Your names, by Your True Name which You love more than the others, treat us well and grant what we ask.

Here, the word 'endurance' appears again, and 'ancientness.' There is a curious sort of paradox: Zuhal is said earlier in the spell to be eternal, yet later He is ancient at the same time. How, then, can an eternal being be 'old'? Being 'eternal' implies not experiencing the process of time, or being outside of time. By 'ancient' then, the text must be stressing that the Saturnine deity is a truly primordial entity, unlike the other younger gods who follow later. The text also stresses the fact that the Saturnine deity is a deity of hardiness (endurance), though it is the tirelessness of a grizzled veteran, rather than a young athlete. Like an old man, Saturn is heavy, sluggish, yet enduring. His power is not the flashy and quick magic of the Sun or Mercury, and it is likely not invoked for fast results (where the other planets might be), but it is a lasting power.

If the reader suspects that the case for Saturn's malevolence has been overstated by the author, it would be wise to remember that the term 'evil' (Arabic *sharr*) occurs repeatedly across several texts. Also, the terms 'honor' and 'evil' appear as repeated terms in this very passage. These likewise appear to be a kind of contradiction: how can a being be evil, or the source of evil (as a related text indicated above), and yet be honorable? The only possible answer is that in the medieval mind, a deity or person could be malevolent, and yet have a code of honor, or at least some frame of reference which humans might possibly understand. Honor implies that the deity will acknowledge sacrifices and prayers made in its honor, and that it will react accordingly. Equally, it implies that the deity may be offended if it is approached without the proper respect and humility. This point may be jarring to many contemporary occultists who

push for an anthrocentric narrative, but it is necessary to stress that most traditional spiritual or occult systems, while operating from a human standpoint, have not placed Man at the sacred centre of their cosmology. If one accepts that deities (by whatever name) are actual and independent beings, then attempting to approach them as equals is the very definition of hubris and/or stupidity. This is not to say that exclusive, subservient worship (in the Abrahamic sense) is necessary to work with a deity, but by comparison, one can speak to one's professional or political superior with deep and genuine respect, without actually worshipping them.

Having discussed those aspects of the text which are repeated, it is good to review those which occur on their own. Saturn is said to be cold, and this follows Islamic cosmology which holds that planets and living beings are 'hot' or 'cold' by nature.[4] Saturn is cold by nature, which could be because He is elderly, or else because He is a chthonic figure. The text also says that His power is slow, but this suggests the relentless, grinding power of a glacier – it does not move quickly, but there is nothing which can resist its momentum. Even more significant is the line which states: 'You are the lord of the other planets, and the very stars fear the sound of Your movement and tremble before Your gaze.' Ibn Wahshiyya is saying clearly that Zuhal is the master of the other powers, and that they are subject to His will. He goes further, stating that the other deities actually fear Zuhal. This raises some very serious questions about why one deity would *fear* another. This point will be explored further below.

We may now consider *The Picatrix*, which has a great deal to say about the character and resonances of Zuhal.[5] While it has more in general to say about Zuhal than *Nabataean Agriculture*, it was compiled later and uses the *Agriculture* as one of its sources, so it is necessary to consider it second. We then look not

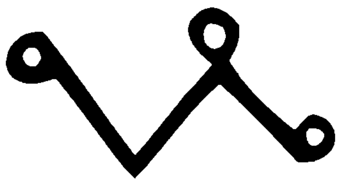
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4 The esoteric master David Beth has alerted me to the fascinating, possibly related concepts of hot and cold spirits and their occult points as operated within the Haitian Vodou tradition.

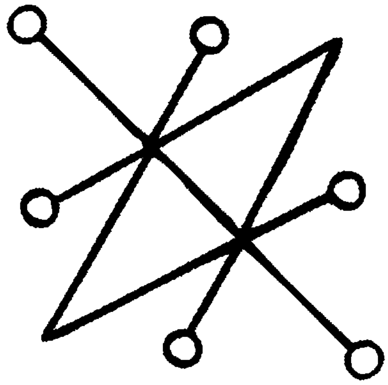
5 The following passages (on pp. 43-47) rely on the recent translation of Ouroboros Press by Hakim Atallah. *Picatrix. Ghayat Al-Hakim. The Goal of the Wise* (2002). Some necessary emendations to the translation have been made in places, indicated by editorial brackets.

only for repetition within *The Picatrix* itself, but try to see if it echoes any themes in Ibn Wahshiyya's works. On Zuhal, it reads [Book 3.1]:

> SATURN for example is the planet whose source holds great strength and has the **knowledge** of **mysterious** orbit and the power to obtain the reason behind things and the ability to find their intentions, the spell of wonders and **knowledge** of **secret** and **mysterious** issues. It also rules the Hebrew and Coptic languages and for external body parts, it rules the right ear, the outside parts and the spleen as an internal organ, which also is considered the source of the **black** [-] mixture of the body and the joints and that which holds the whole parts together.
>
> Its fabrics: all kinds of rough fabrics, its professions: leather tanning, farming and building and [mining] and it rules the **repulsive** tastes like the wild pear; as for locations, it rules **black** mountains, **dark** valleys, basements, wells, graveyards and the wilderness.
>
> Its jewels: onyx, **black stones,** and loadstone. Its metals: lead, iron, and everything else that has turned **black,** putrefied and **stinky** smelling. Its plants: oak, safflower, carob, palm tree, caraway, boxthorn, cumin, onion and all hard-leaved plants and thorny **harmful** trees. Its drugs: aloe, myrrh, their equivalent, wild castor-oil plant and wild colocynth. Its scents: wisteria and licorice.
>
> Its animals: every **dark, black** and **ugly** animal like **black** camels, sheep, pigs, wolves, monkeys, dogs, cats and all birds with a long neck and gruff voice like ostriches, buzzards, owls, vermin, crows, bats, cranes and all **stinky,** dirty animals living **underground**. Its colors: **black, dark** colors and **gray,** and finally its symbol:



We will employ the same technique as above, and begin with those attributes that *The Picatrix* repeats both within itself, or echoes from the *Nabataean Agriculture* (which it cites at times). The text repeats the terms 'black' or 'dark' several times, stressing that black animals, trees and minerals are sacred to Zuhal. The use of the term 'black stone' is not accidental – the *Picatrix* author is aware that the Saturnine idol is itself a Black Cube of some kind, and is referencing the Kaaba, as Ibn Wahshiyya has done prior. The text also references 'knowledge' and 'secret' several times. This indicates that Zuhal rules over strange and unknown things, mysteries, secrets, and matters generally considered hidden or taboo. He is not, by contrast, the god of public knowledge (like Mercury), and one does not approach Saturn to apprehend things which can be easily discovered by studies, in books, or via normal channels of information. Rather, Zuhal is a deity who guards secrets, grudges, things whispered, and mysteries that are buried by time or other forces. Zuhal is not the god of the researcher, so much as the god of the thief who steals the research of another. He is the patron of grave-robbers and archaeologists, who crack open the tombs and secrets of the dead, only to hoard them in remote locations. Whenever a movie shows knowledge concealed in a secret laboratory, or ancient secrets sealed behind vault doors, that is a manifestation of Saturnine power. The sigil noted above looks to be a partial rending of the better known Saturnine sigil:



Later, *The Picatrix* elaborates on Zuhal's influence [Book 3.7]:

> SATURN's power is **cold,** hard and its core is made of misfortune, corruption, **stinky,** vicious, **betrayal** and is **scary.** Saturn also if he gets hold of any matter it **betrays**; separates and **scares**. It has the pursuance of

> gardens, rivers, plowing, farming, provides with a lot of money, cheapness, poverty, disputes, traveling to far bad places, it also has the signs of **depression, grudge,** cunning, circumcision, refuge, no socialization and every other matter which has to do with **evil,** forcefulness, jail, change, fatigue, hard work, weakness, corruption, truthful words, friendliness, determination and old **age,** advocacy, building, [**depressions**], [**fear**], too much thinking, worries, experiences, **anger,** insistent, doing less goodness, concerns, **sadness,** difficulties, **grimness, death,** cheating, inheritance, accusations, **old** things, brooding, too much talking, the **knowledge of secrets,** the **mysterious side of things,** and if Saturn is retrograde it holds the signs of disgrace and weakness. It also has the signs of binding insistence [restraint] on certain matters, and if Saturn as it is retrograde happens to face another planet, it weakens that planet too.

These passages reveal a great deal about the way that the *Ghayat/Picatrix* tradition understands Zuhal. *The Picatrix* here stresses terms that indicate 'fear,' 'betrayal,' 'age,' and 'depression/sorrow.' These do not present a very pleasant character of the deity, in fact, Zuhal seems to be personified as a grim, curmudgeonly figure. Significantly, it notes that the deity has dominion over secret knowledge, which has been discussed above. There is a definite unpleasantness to the way the planet is described, as its odor is repugnant, reeking. Most significantly, Saturn is dark and dreadful, even menacing. If a plant, stone, animal, or place is rough, bitter, foul-smelling or foul-sounding, or dark colored, it belongs to Saturn. These traits are considered distinctive attributes of Saturn, and reflect how Muslim magicians understood the nature of the deity.

In going beyond *The Picatrix,* we note that its compiler repeats the earlier words of Ibn Wahshiyya, that Saturn is *cold.* At the risk of re-stating what that transmission has already explained so clearly, we should alert the reader once more to the important fact that Zuhal is understood in this particular Islamic tradition as a cold, harsh, distant power. Zuhal is the icy, harsh power that embodies restraint – which can come from sickness, weakness,

age, imprisonment, isolation, and even death. He is the deity that symbolizes restraint, and his influence corrupts and distorts the power of the other planets, to the point that the *Picatrix* tradition warns against attempting planetary magic if Saturn is adversely placed or retrograde, as the tradition holds that Saturn's restraining power will limit or distort an otherwise successful magical working. This is echoed strongly towards the end of *The Picatrix* in Book 4.4, where the text relates the 'secret natures' of the planetary intelligences. Of Saturn it says, "The secret nature of Zuhal is the **power of restraint,** sealing secrets, destroying lands, troubling the heart, and becalming waters." Clearly, the Saturnine deity is not only able to overpower human affairs, but to restrain the workings of other deities.

Like *Nabataean Agriculture, The Picatrix* contains several spells for contacting the Saturnine deity. These will be discussed later as recommended practices in Section Three, but it would be wise to explore one here. *The Picatrix* reads in Book III:

> When you address Saturn, dress yourself in **black**. Betake yourself to the proper place on **Saturday,** having in hand an **iron** ring, and take with you a censor in which you place charcoal burning with incense. [Recipe of incense omitted for brevity]. Having censed the place, speak thus:
>
> 'Oh great master who possesses a great name and who is situated above all planets, you [who are placed] high and in an elevated place. You are the Lord Saturn, **cold** and dry, shadowy, author of **good,** true in your friendship, sincere in your promises, persistent and tenacious in your friendships and enmities, of tenacious and profound intellect, true in your sayings and your promises, unique in your operations, isolate, apart from the other gods, with **sorrow** and suffering, distant from mindless pleasure. You are the **old one,** the **ancient,** at once wise and a destroyer of good judgement, you mix **good** and **evil**. Sad and unhappy is he who vexes you, happy is he whom you favor. In you are placed virtue and power, a spirit of doing **good** and **evil**. I demand, father and lord, by your high names and your marvelous actions to do for me such

> and such... I call you by your names, oh Heylil, you in the seventh heaven: Zuhal (Arabic), Saturn (Latin), Keyvan (Persian), Chronos (Greek), Śani (India).'

This text echoes the element of 'cold' and adds to it 'dry.' It includes the dichotomy that Zuhal is far away, above all other planetary spheres, and it is good to note once more that 'Zuhal' in Arabic actually means 'the distant,' or 'the alien.' One notes also the dichotomy between good and evil, since the invoker clearly hopes to gain one and avoid the other. This particular spell is also quite interesting, because the invoker demonstrates the Hermetic thinking that whatever entity he or she calls 'Zuhal' in Arabic is the same entity that a European calls 'Saturn' or 'Chronos,' or a Persian calls 'Keyvan,' or an Indian calls 'Śani.' It is significant that Saturday in Arabic is understood to be Saturn's day, despite the fact that in Arabic it is simply called *yom al-sebt,* meaning 'the seventh day.'

The text describes, finally, the people who are most vulnerable to Zuhal's influence:

> Saturn is used to ask for needs that you desire from chieftains, nobles, presidents, kings, old people and dead people, criminals, recipients, the people benefiting of inheritance, heroes, deputies, peasants, builders, slaves, thieves, parents, grandparents and prominent people and if you are sad or sick with a deadly disease and every other similar request of the same nature ask for it from Saturn with the help of a drawing that I make for you. [Book 4.7]

This is a very broad list of people and professions. On the one hand, this can be understood to be a list of people who have a natural Saturnine resonance; on the other hand, it can indicate that certain classes or types of people are especially vulnerable to Saturn's influence. Some of these, like kings and rulers, are shared by Jupiter, and others, like heroes, by Mars. Saturn, however, has several that are unique to himself, like criminals and the dead. It is noteworthy that Islamic tradition and the pre-Islamic Arab and Persian traditions lack a coherent doctrine of necromancy, because they did not really have a belief in

the effective dead. They were certainly ahead of their time in having celestial magic, and elaborate hierarchies of spirits and angels, but there are no records that relate to people working magic through ghosts, because these cultures had relatively few accounts of ghosts or phantoms. They were not taboo so much as they were ignored or discounted. Ghouls and spirits, however, were counted as being very real, and as *Nabataean Agriculture* and *The Picatrix* show, the magicians of these cultures believed very much in the visible summoning of spirits, even in front of an audience.

Nevertheless, Zuhal is said to have influence over death and the dead. Since necromancy is not an attested Islamic practice in text or contemporary folklore, we may understand that 'the dead' refers to affairs that are related to the dead, such as inheritance, or knowledge that disappears with the dead, or similar such things.[6] One notes also the curious passage quoted above on p. 40, where the invoker prays, "Then when we die, ward off the worms and reptiles from our flesh." Saturn appears to be connected to the state of the corpse, which has been interred at this point. As Islamic tradition holds that the spirit remains in the grave until Judgement Day, perhaps the idea here is that Saturn can maintain the corpse (the abode of the spirit) in a better state than it might otherwise achieve. Nevertheless, Saturn has a very chthonic aspect and is connected to the soil, especially that which is subterranean. He has an agricultural nature, but this is related primarily to those things which grow underground (like turnips), not above ground (like corn). He is also the lord of deep, dark places like caves, caverns, graves, and things which have been buried, or blackened with time, and also those animals which live deep underground. This is a very interesting feature for a planetary deity which was thought to be 'far away' on the very edge of space/time. Perhaps this is because in the medieval mind, the deep underground is also a kind of 'far away,' and closer to the subterranean kingdom which Zuhal was thought to inhabit.

It is worth noting that in the Iranian tradition, which is part of *The Picatrix*, the distant (Persian 'Keyvan') is said to be extremely cold, and yet to be directly

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6 Nevertheless, Saturn's connection to the dead will be discussed further below.

connected to the underworld.[7] This seems paradoxical, unless one accepts that the ancient Islamic conception of the Saturnine deity had the dual aspect of being alien and removed, yet also deeply subterranean. This is likely coming from the idea that the orbit *(eqlim)* of Saturn was understood to be spherical, and so Saturn must be as far below us as He is above, and so those deepest places in the earth become sacred to Him by virtue of their being 'distant' from us.

Saturnine Appearances: Theophanies

In considering the Islamic understanding of the Saturnine deity, it would also be good to consider the way that the entity is said to manifest visibly when it is called. It is understood that the deity's manifestation is a literal phenomenon, but also that its panoply is symbolic of the Saturnine deity's qualities. While *Nabataean Agriculture* is generally silent on the appearance of Saturn, *The Picatrix* and *Kitab al-Ustuwwatas* both provided some visual description of the Saturnine theophany (divine appearance) and also the idols of Zuhal.

The *Kitab al-Ustuwwatas* is a curious Islamic text, which transmits a Saturnine anecdote from India.[8] The text relates that at a time when India was still uncivilized and people were essentially 'savages,' there ruled a king called Safnadula. He had a dream in which Saturn appeared to him as a 'black man,' and instructed him to convene all his governors together for a religious ceremony before the black stone idol of Saturn. Safnadula did so, and all 72 of his nobles came for the religious event. The nobles and the statue were incensed, and an animal was sacrificed before the idol. The 'black man' emerged from the idol, and bestowed one of his 72 spirits to each of the nobles, along with the secret name of that spirit, so that the noble would be able to invoke or evoke the

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7 See Philippe Gignoux "Hell I. Zoroastrianism" in *Encylopedia Iranica* Vol. XII, Fasc. 2, 2003. pp. 154-156.

8 See Charles Burnett. "Remarques Paléographiques et philologiques sur les noms d'anges et d'esprits dans les traités de magie traduits de l'arabe en latin" in *Mélanges de L'Ecole Francaise de Rome,* Tome 114 (2002), pp. 657-668.

spirit when he returned to his home province.[9] The manuscript, interestingly, provides the names of the 72 spirits, in case some aspiring magician wishes to try such a ceremony at home.[10] These spirits are said to have entered into the nobles, and empowered them to be effective at 'civilizing' the various kingdoms which make up India. It is worth noting here that one major distinction of medieval Islamic magic is that there is to be a recurring theme of a magician being able to evoke a spirit visibly before a crowd, with the expectation that the entity will appear in visible form.[11] This tradition is also interesting, because it connects Saturn with the earliest levels of government, and depicts an ancient time in which Saturn is the only deity, and the patron of the state. This is echoed by the Roman tradition, in which Saturn is the founding deity of the Italian kingdom.

In terms of the theophanies, the *Picatrix* compiler cites two sources: one is *The Interpretation of Spiritual Talismans* and the other is *The Benefits of the Rocks of Mercury*. The first of these describes Zuhal as appearing as a crow-headed and camel-footed man, seated on a throne, with a scepter in the right hand and a spear in the left hand. The crow and camel are both noted in *The Picatrix* as being Saturnine animals. The crow is a black bird with an ugly voice, and the camel is a tough, enduring animal with an ugly voice, and inhabits the desert (Zuhal's territory). The crow represents wisdom and malice, while the camel represents endurance. It is also noteworthy that being camel-footed was a demonic attribute in the Arab folklore of North Africa and Andalusia. Even in contemporary popular culture, the demoness 'Ai'sha Kandisha is said to be a beautiful woman with camel's feet. This is analogous to Christian folklore in which the Devil can be recognized by his cloven-hooves. Zuhal is seated on a throne (or chair) because He is a sovereign, and He bears a scepter as a symbol of dominion, and the spear is indicative of His ability to afflict harm or hardship.

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9 The occurrence of the number "72" may be significant. It calls to mind the Egyptian tradition, in which the god of darkness (Seth) also has 72 companions.

10 The list of names in Latin and Arabic appear in Appendix I.

11 If one assumes that magic is not a real force, this seems a very strange thing to suggest to someone who has the financial wherewithal to actually acquire these texts (which were extremely costly).

An alternate yet related description is the same, but has Zuhal standing on a pulpit, which symbolizes that He is said to be a master of wisdom, secrets, and the religious sciences.

The second theophany, described in *Benefits of the Rocks of Mercury,* describes the Saturnine deity as a man who holds a whale over his head, and is standing atop a dragon. This is a very interesting description, as dragons are curiously quite rare in Arabic sources, though more common in Persian or Indian. The dragon symbolizes dark, chaotic forces which are under Saturn's control. He is not spearing or killing the animal (like St George or Archangel Michael), rather it is the foundation of his power. Saturn in turn supports the whale, which in Islamic cosmology supports the cosmos itself. This image makes Zuhal into a sub-chthonic figure.



Alternately, the same text describes Saturn as He stands atop a dragon, and bears a sickle and a scepter, alternately just a large scythe, and is robed in grey and black (see image on the right, from Krakow, Biblioteka Jagiellonska, MS 793, from Pingree's edition). One notes that the scepter indicates dominion, and the scythe is the instrument of reaping. As one might expect, Saturn himself is clothed in dark colors, namely blacks and greys.

As noted above, the *Kitab al-Ustuwwatas* describes a Saturnine theophany from India, in which the deity manifests in the dream of King Safnadula, and then later manifests in public view after a ritual is publicly performed. Here

the deity appears as a dark-skinned man, dressed in robes of black, green, and yellow. The black is chthonic, while green is a reference to the agricultural aspect of Saturn, and the color yellow is likely a reference to the Hindu belief that Saturn (Śani) is the son of the solar deity Surya. Thus in all three theophanies, one notes the repetition of the Saturnine deity appearing as a male figure in dark colors (grey or black).

Saturnine Appearances: Idols

The Picatrix, Nabataean Agriculture, and *Kitab al-Ustuwwatas* all mention the worship of the Saturnine deity involving an idol, to which sacrifices are made. Ibn Wahshiyya in *Nabataean Agriculture* states that the idol is a black stone, which should be placed on black sand. The *Kitab al-Ustuwwatas* mentions that the Saturnine deity emerges from his idol after an animal is sacrificed, but does not describe the idol itself. This is paralleled by an account in *The Picatrix* (3.9) where the anonymous compiler describes a ceremony from the *Kitab al-Istimatis,* in which one makes an idol with iron feet, iron of course being a metal of Saturn. The idol is to be dressed in clothes of black, green, and red. This directly parallels the supposed Indian account of Saturn, except that red (also a solar color) replaces yellow.

However, *The Picatrix* compiler also uses a second account from the *Kitab al-Istimatis* tradition, in which he describes the Saturnine deity as a cube. Specifically, he notes that Saturn's 'soul' is an entity called 'Brimas,' which has six component souls, which are top, bottom, left, right, front and back. An additional spirit holds them together, like a binding agent. He states that their names are (*Picatrix* 3.9): *Brimas* (The Composite Soul), then *Tūs* (Top), *Khrūs* (Bottom), *Ciyūs* (Right), *Diriyūs* (Left), *Tamus* (Front), *Dorūs* (Back), and *Tihitūs* (Binder). While the color of the cube is not mentioned, given that the text has explicitly stated above that Saturn's color is black, it is almost certainly a Black Cube.

As noted previously, the description of the Saturnine deity as a 'black stone' or as a six-sided idol could only have been interpreted as a direct reference to the black stone *(al-hajar al-aswad),* of Mecca, which is the symbolic heart of the Kaaba. For those unfamiliar with the legend, it is said that the black stone

fell from the heavens in the time of Adam and Eve, and has served as a sacred marker since the dawn of humanity. While some believe it to be basalt or glass, it is most likely predominantly iron ore if it is indeed the remnants of a meteorite. The legend of black iron falling from the sky, and becoming worshipped by ancient pagan tribes suggests that it was originally an idol with no connection to the Abrahamic deity. This point will be discussed further below in the Second Section (Saturnine Gnosis). Yet for the moment, suffice to say that the Islamic tradition either suggests a humanoid idol dressed in black with secondary colors, or else a black stone cube.

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Saturn in the Classical Tradition

In the study of classical tradition and magic, the Saturnine deity occupies a very complex position. This may be partially because the various myths and traditions that include Saturn are themselves quite varied, even extremely so, yet quite clearly address a singular deity and not a composite deity like Jupiter/Zeus. It should also be noted that when we speak about 'classical' tradition, we normally refer to the hybrid Hellenistic culture that was partially Greek and partially Latin, and usually referred to as 'Roman.' When we speak about anything 'Roman,' we need to be aware that there genuinely was such a thing as Italic (or Latin) culture prior to Greek influences, but even that seems to have had Etruscan influences. Greek and Italic language and culture were separate, but did share some parallels due to their common Indo-European heritage. Greek religion and myth might have had parallels to its Italian counterparts, and when Greek learning and culture entered into Roman culture, it had a profound effect on the Roman myths, if not rituals. That said, this chapter will examine the deity known as 'Cronos' or 'Chronos' in Greek, and 'Saturn' in Latin.[12]

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12 For the sake of ease in this chapter, we will use the proper name 'Saturn' as opposed to 'Saturn/Cronos,' unless otherwise noted.

There is some dispute over the etymology of the name 'Saturn,' but the best explanation to-date is that it is a Latin adaptation of the Etruscan underworld god *Satre*. Satre was a malevolent chthonic figure, identified with the northern direction, also with storms and earthquakes. There are rival explanations of the name, but none are as tenable. 'Cronos,' on the other hand, clearly stems from Greek *keir* (to cut), and is connected with *kar* (action) in Sanskrit, which yields *karma*. Saturn/Cronos is also connected with the agricultural function of cutting, in the sense of the harvest, and so the sickle has always been the principal symbol of the Saturnine deity. As agriculture has various stages (sowing, growing, harvest), Saturn was the deity responsible for the final stage of agriculture, hence the scythe/sickle as a symbol. Of course, Saturn's nature of harvesting was understood to be more broad than just agriculture – Saturn was the harvester of *all* things, even the gods, as his mythology makes plain. Saturn is not a creator deity; his role is more related to entropy within the cosmic framework. Saturn/Cronos is identified also with Time. This may be possibly due to Cronos' name being similar to 'chronos' (time) in Greek. Time is itself a reaper, a force that ends the lives of all living beings and human enterprises. The mythology of the Greeks and Romans shows that the empires of the gods are vulnerable to time and change, and this negative aspect of time is embodied by the Saturnine deity.

Saturn, according to Greek and Roman culture, was partnered with a female consort, usually said to be his sister. Interestingly, the earlier accounts of the deity suggest that this was *Lua Mater*, which translates as 'Mother Destruction.' It is well known that in Indo-European religious systems, death and destruction are often embodied by female figures such as the Irish Morrigan and Indian Kali Ma. Roman records report that the worship of this goddess, Lua Mater, involved the offering of enemy weapons, taken as the spoils of victory, which were immolated. It is likely that this sacrifice was part of a dual offering, in which the enemy combatants were burned (alive or dead) to Saturn, while their arms and armor were burned simultaneously to Lua. Such a ritual finds parallels in the *purushamedha* rites of the Vedas, which, like the Roman human sacrifices, fell into disuse with time. While this may seem brutal, even shocking to the contemporary reader, it should be kept in mind that the reli-

gious and sacrificial practices of the ancient world were often quite bloody, as exemplified best by the Celts of Europe, and the Aztecs in the Americas. The fact that Saturn's female counterpart was actually named 'destruction' is strongly suggestive of Saturn's own dangerous nature. In later time, however, as Saturn's nature was rehabilitated by the Roman state, his spouse became identified as Ops, the Roman goddess of plenty and wealth. Her cult was celebrated in the Republic, like Saturn's, as a more benign agricultural tradition. The Greeks, on the other hand, always identified Cronos with his sister Rhea, the daughter of Gaia, who was (like Ops) associated with the benign aspects of the agriculture and the harvest.

There are several conflicting myths that concern Saturn's parentage, but the discrepancies are minor. The popular Greek account is that the parents of Cronos were the titans Uranus and Gaia, and the alternate version is that He was the son of the titan-serpents Ophion and Eurynome. Tradition claims that Cronos overthrew his own father, in some versions with the help of his sister Rhea (Latin Ops), and then seized control over the cosmos. In the account featuring Uranus, Cronos uses a sickle or scythe to sever his father's genitals, which are cast into the ocean, and so the sickle/scythe becomes the chief emblem of Cronos/Saturn thereafter.

The Roman account is somewhat different, though it shows Greek influences. Macrobius takes the traditional Hellenic account, and helps interpret it using Latinate terminology for his Roman audience. He states in the *Saturnalia* (1.8.) that initially there was Primal Chaos, and there was not yet any such concept or being as Time, because Chaos was itself eternal *(cum chaos esset, tempora non fuisse)*. When the primordial being Coelus (cosmos) came into being, its appearance ruptured the purity of Chaos, and severed existence from non-existence. This act of 'cutting' Chaos away from the newborn cosmos created Time (Saturn), which Macrobius infers is the remnant of Chaos within existence. This is evident in that Time brings change and instability to all things in time, even to gods and kingdoms. Time is chaotic, and therefore hostile to the cosmos, and Greek and Roman tradition agree that as soon as Saturn/Cronos came into being, He attacked his own cosmic 'father,' deposing him and taking control of the cosmos. Macrobius also points out that the

Saturnalia and Cronia festivals are absolutely wild, chaotic revels in which all social norms and taboos were violated, and the social order was completely inverted. This celebration of Chaos, which was otherwise entirely antithetical to the Roman state, is a recognition of Saturn as a being that ultimately stems from Chaos, despite his 'creation' coming from the act of Coelus (cosmos).

The Greek and Roman myths agree that the rule of the Saturnine deity was a golden age of plenty and enlightenment, and all beings thrived under the care of the monarch. However, Saturn himself was deposed by his own children. When it was reported to him that his children would pose a threat to his existence, Saturn consumed the infant deities whole. Sculptors and painters have presented this scene grotesquely, usually with an old man chewing on the flesh of a screaming infant. While this image is colorful and provocative, the traditions indicate that Saturn swallowed his children whole, much as a person might swallow a medical pill. The children are contained, undamaged but dormant, within the being of the Saturnine deity until his youngest child (Zeus/Jupiter) releases them by use of a purgative, and then the younger gods war against Saturn and the Titans. Saturn was deposed by Jupiter, but Jupiter was unable to destroy Saturn, just as Saturn could not destroy Coelus. Gods, it must be noted, are resilient beings, yet in mythology they can be maimed, crippled, and imprisoned. Saturn, then, is placed in chains, and banished to the chthonic realm of Tartarus, which He is said to rule.[13] The 'chains' of Saturn become one of the definitive parts of his divine panoply thereafter.

While Cronos is relegated to being a sort of god-devouring monster in Hellenic tradition, the Roman Saturn is a much more beloved figure. Although Jupiter, Mars, and Minerva become the major gods of the empire, the Roman state and its historians acknowledged that Saturn was the original deity of the Roman people, and in fact they claimed that Italians themselves were descended from Saturn. The Mons Saturnius is one of the hills on which Rome was built, and the oldest temple in Rome belongs to Saturn. Saturn has his

13 According to an alternate tradition, Saturn is banished to Italy, where he fathers the Italic people. This corresponds to Caesar's remarks that the Gauls of France considered themselves descended from Dis Pater.

own priesthood, and the state treasury was kept at his temple. The original name of the Italian settlement situated on the site of Rome was 'Saturnium.' Further, Saturn enjoyed a week-long series of revels each year, which began on 17 December. For a deposed deity, Saturn enjoyed a very profound respect, second perhaps only to Jupiter. The very memory of Saturn's prior rule was not one of a cruel despot, but as noted above, a golden age where all living beings lacked for nothing.

Yet Saturn's character is not benign, and there are no records that suggest otherwise. Being the king of an age of plenty does not suggest that the Saturnine deity was a kindly master, but rather that under His reign, the earth did not withhold its bounty. Saturn was the origin of the western image of the Grim Reaper, and as the deity identified with harvesting, He was expected to harvest plants, animals, and humans alike. Macrobius reports (1.7) that in the earliest memories of the Italic peoples, Saturn was worshipped with human sacrifices; later, when this practice fell into disfavor, torches were burned in His honor as a substitute. Modern scholars, however, of the classical period argue that Macrobius is only partially correct: there is no question that human sacrifice was part of the worship of the Reaper. However, while Macrobius tries to suggest that burning torches substituted for human sacrifices, Versnel has discussed the considerable evidence that the gladiatorial games were carried out as ritual observances *(munera)* to Saturn.[14] The practice of human sacrifice was not solely an Italic custom. The Greeks too performed human sacrifices to Cronos on the day of his festival, the Cronia. Pophyry reports that in the city of Rhodes, on the day of the Cronia, a criminal was taken to the gates of the city, given alcohol, and then slaughtered.[15]

The Greeks and Romans had conflicting, even paradoxical views of the world under Saturn's rule. Both cultures agreed that at some distant point in time, the Saturnine deity had been master of the three worlds, celestial, terrestrial, and chthonic (alternately, earth, ocean, and underworld). While Saturn ruled, the world was a utopia, a golden age of plenty. All were equal, and thrived

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14 Versnel, pp. 211-215.

15 Ibid. p. 100.

somehow under Saturn's rule. The celebrated Roman poet Virgil mentions this in his fourth *Eclogue*, lines 5-8:

Ultima Cumaei venit iam carminis aetas;
Magnus ab integro saeclorum nascitur ordo.
iam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna,
iam nova progenies caelo demittitur alto.

Now comes the final era of the Sibyl's song;
The great order of the ages is born afresh.
And now justice returns, the return of Saturn's reign;
Now a new lineage is sent down from high heaven.

Clearly, Virgil is not suggesting the return of the Saturnine kingdom as a hideous nightmare. Nevertheless, the Saturnine kingdom was not ideal, for which reason it had to be overthrown by the Olympian gods. Saturn was an aspect of Chaos, and so the equality enjoyed by all was an equality of utter subjugation. In fact, the gods themselves had absolutely no part in the Saturnine empire, since Saturn committed cannibalism, consuming the deities and holding them within his own essence. The Titans may have enjoyed His rule, but arguably they also were monstrous aberrations that had survived from the same primordial Chaos as their king. It should not be forgotten that the hundred-handed monsters known in Greek as the *Hecatonchires* or Latin as *Centimanes* were actually the brothers of Saturn, and differed from Him largely in that their chaotic essence was evident physically, where Saturn's was internal. The eventual war of the gods and the titans was the battle of Chaos against order, as with similar battles across many mythologies.

The Roman festival of the Saturnalia (Greek Cronia) deserves some consideration. Macrobius (1.7) reports that initially, the entire tenth month of the year, December, was sacred to Saturn, while the eleventh, January, was sacred to Janus. Within the tenth month, the ancient Italians, and the Romans who followed them, celebrated the festival of Saturn for seven days, from 17-23 December. The Saturnalia was wild, even debauched, and orgiastic at times.

During this period, all norms and taboos were overturned. Servants became masters, and masters became servants. Servants could (and did) abuse and insult their owners, and may even have taken sexual liberties with them, much as their masters would have used their slaves at a whim throughout the year. Celebrants greeted each other with the cry '*io Saturnalia*,' which served to remind each other that they were celebrating a religious occasion. A Saturnine Prince, the *Princeps Saturnalicus*, was appointed in place of the usual king or emperor, to serve as the master of ceremonies, and his dictates were generally followed. Small, humorous gifts were given by friends, and it was a time for pranks, foolishness, and otherwise normally unacceptable behavior. Exceptionally during the Saturnalia festival, the chains or cords which normally tied the legs of Saturn's idol were undone, symbolizing His temporary release from bondage.

In our contemporary spiritual cynicism, one might think 'Yes, well no doubt things didn't get *too* carried away – what slave would abuse his owner, knowing social norms would go back to normal on December 24th?' Or equally, one might reasonably ask why such a bizarre festival was celebrated at all, when it must have caused some awkwardness when it was over, much alike any good party does when the majority of the guests are intoxicated and wild. The reply to both objections is that the ancients truly did believe that the gods were real beings, and not simply the vapid archetypes that modern occultism has reduced them to. The Romans and Greeks believed that Saturn/Cronos was an actual deity, malevolent in character, and that this festival was intended to appease Him, so that He would not curse them with long-term or even permanent social chaos. If the celebrations were carried out half-heartedly, people believed that Saturn would be angered, and thus debauchery and madness needed to be embraced and reveled in. To the author's knowledge, there are no records of Roman nobles objecting publicly to the festivals; at worst, some admitted that they tried to escape from it by traveling at that time. It was only later in the Christian period that the Saturnalia festival was downplayed, and somewhat suspiciously, December 25th became a prominent Christian holiday which involves the exchange of presents.

Further, and this will be already obvious to the reader, the Romans considered the seventh day of the Roman week as 'Saturn's Day,' which survives

even into modern English as 'Saturday.' It is curious that given the number of Roman deities that are attested, one of the seven days was given to this deity. This suggests again that despite the popularity of the later gods, the figure of Saturn remained of major importance to the Roman citizenry, as days of the week were named only after major divinities.

Saturn As A Magical Deity

Saturn/Cronos appears in classical and medieval Hermetic magic as a force of restraint, divination, or malefica. Plutarch tells us of a magical island in the West which is supposed to be the prison of Cronos. Confined to a grotto and sleeping on a golden stone, Cronos rules the island and is being served by his former subjects in the shape of daemons. Locked in a magical sleep in which he receives secret wisdom, he communicates with humans who come to the island in regular intervals through the intermediation of the daemons. These appear to the human islanders in dreams or even in liminal waking states to reveal His gnosis. This secret island and its mysteries are only accessible to the magical dreamer who is able to relate to the dream-consciousness of this paradisiacal world and its ruler, Cronos.

In the *Papyri Graecae Magicae* (PGM) we find repeated references to the 'chains of Cronos' as a force invoked for binding, or as something by which the gods themselves swear. There is one particular spell called the 'Salt Oracle of Cronos,' which is essentially a divination spell.

The PGM reports:

> 'Oracle of Cronos' in great demand, called 'little mill': Take two measures of salt and grind with a handmill while saying the formula many times until the god appears to you. Do it at night in a place where grass grows. If while you are speaking you hear the heavy step of [someone] and a clatter of iron, the god is coming bound with chains, holding a sickle. But do not be frightened since you are protected by the phylactery that will be revealed to you. Be clothed with clean linen in the garb of a priest of Isis. Offer to the god sage together with a heart of a cat and horse manure.

The formula to be spoken while you are mixing is this:

'I call you, the great, holy, the one who created the whole inhabited world, against whom the transgression was committed by your own son, whom Helios bound with adamantine fetters lest the universe be mixed together, you hermaphrodite, father of the thunderbolt, you who hold down those under the earth, *Aie Oi Paidalis Phrenoteicheido Stygardes Sankleon / Genechrona Koirapsai Kerideu Thala-Mnia Ochota Anedei;* come, master, god, and tell me by necessity concerning the NN matter, for I am the one who revolted against you, *Paidolis Mainolis Mainolieus.*' These are to be said while the salt is being ground.

And the formula which compels him is: *'Kybdobris Koderieus Ankyrieus Xantomoulis.'* You say these things when He appears threateningly, in order that He might be subdued and speak about the things you ask.

The phylactery in great demand for him [is]: On the rib of a young pig carve Zeus holding fast a sickle and this name: *'Chthoumilon.'* Or let it be the rib of a black, scaly, castrated boar.

Dismissal: *'Anaea Ocheta Thalamnia Keri-Deu / Koirapsia Genechrona Sanelon Sty-Gardes Chleido Phrainole Paidolis Iaei,* Go away, master of the world, forefather; go to your own places in order that the universe be maintained. Be gracious to us, lord.' [PGM IV. 3086-3124; *italics mine*]

The text makes a point of saying that the spell is 'in great demand,' which suggests that it was known to be effective. Nevertheless, half of the spell is the instructions for protecting oneself from the Titan's anger, as the instructions make clear that if Cronos appears, He will be angry. He must be compelled to cooperate, and the magician must take precautions against Him. The spell identifies Cronos as having knowledge of the future, which is an indicator of His control over time. The spell is said to actually compel the god to appear, and when He does, His panoply includes chains and a sickle. The god is not

expected to stay, and in fact the magician must insist that Cronos "go to [his] own places in order that the universe be maintained," in other words, that Cronos must return to His star, and to the chthonic depths of Tartarus. If the Saturnine deity were to remain, His presence would destabilize the cosmos, because Saturn is himself a being of Chaos.

Speaking of Chaos, the PGM also mentions Cronos more directly in connection with Chaos, and as the scepter-bestower of the goddess Hecate. In PGM IV. 2841-2847, the scroll reads:

> As everlasting band around your temples
> You wear great Cronos' chains, unbreakable
> And unremovable, and you hold in
> Your hands a golden scepter. Letters around
> Your scepter Cronos wrote himself and gave
> To you to wear that all things stay steadfast:
> Subduer and subdued, mankind's subduer,
> And force-subduer; Chaos, too, you rule.

The text here states that Hecate, herself a Titan that survived the revolt of the gods, wears the chains of Cronos. It cannot be thought that these chains are a punishment – rather, they are symbols of the restraining and binding power of the Saturnine deity. Likewise, the text states that Cronos has inscribed a magical formula on the scepter (like, torches) which Hecate bears. Immediately after, the text states that Hecate rules Chaos – as the scepter is the emblem of rule, and it has just been mentioned, the text is eluding that Cronos has transmitted or delegated part of his power over Chaos to Hecate. This stands to reason, as like Saturn, Hecate is a remnant of the golden age, who has uniquely survived the transition into the Hellenic age of the gods.

Saturn is not only a magical deity in the classical period, but is also invoked in the medieval period which follows. Kieckhefer's work on medieval necromancy, entitled *Forbidden Rites*, reports that a 15th century European text, the *Liber Angelis*, contains a Saturnine experiment to destroy an enemy. It reads (pp. 71-72):

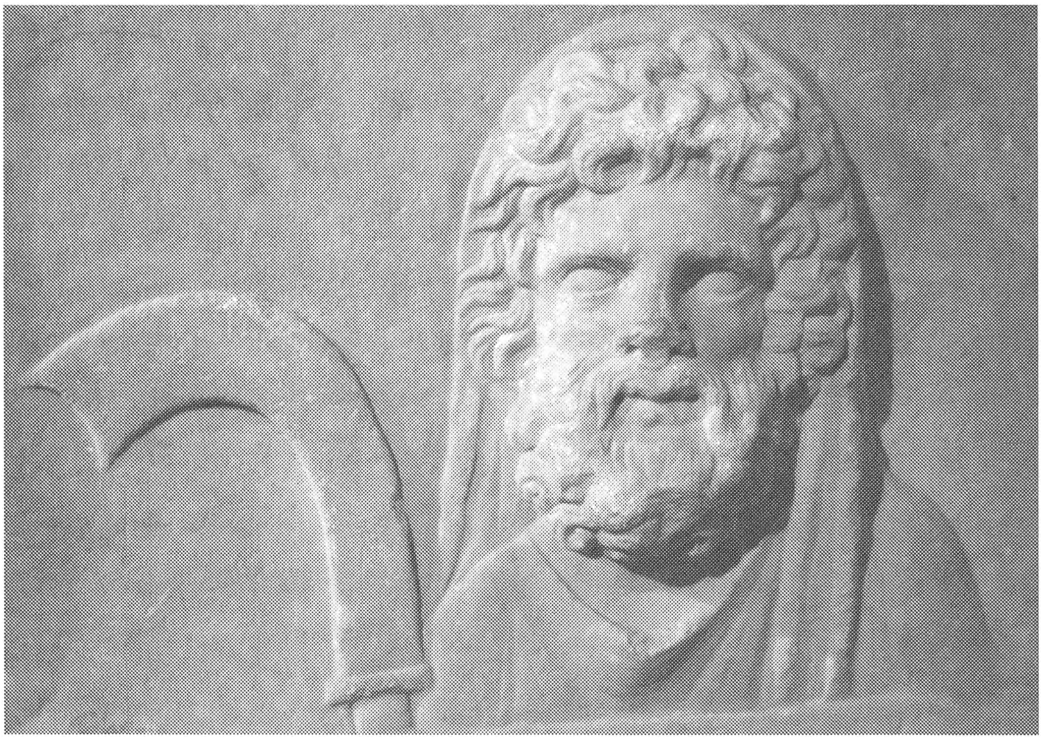
> Later medieval books of magic are seldom shy about giving straightforwardly harmful formulas. A fifteenth-century *Liber de angelis, annulis, karecteribus et imaginibus plantetarum* (Book of angels, rings, characters, and images of the planets) in the Cambridge University Library contains an experiment called the *Vindicta Troie* (Vengeance of Troy), which can be used to arouse hatred or to cause bodily harm or even death. The procedure calls for making an image on the day and in the hour of Saturn, in the name of the person to be harmed. The image must be made of wax, preferably from candles used at a funeral. It should be as ugly as possible; the face should be contorted, and there should be hands in place of feet and vice versa. The victim's name should be inscribed on the forehead of the image, the name of the planet Saturn on its breast, and the seals or characters of Saturn between its shoulders. The operator should call upon the spirits of Saturn to descend from on high and afflict the named victim. The image should be fumigated with various substances, including human bones and hair, then wrapped in a funeral cloth and buried in some unclean place, face downward. If the magician wishes to harm any particular member of the victim's body, there are instructions for binding the corresponding member on the image with a funeral cloth and piercing the image with a needle; to kill the victim, the magician should insert the needle into the spine, from the head down to the heart.

It is significant that this 'operation' or 'experiment' is called the *Vindicta Troie* (Vengeance of Troy), which suggests that the necromancer performing it would have understood the rite to be classical (Greco-Roman) in terms of its origin period.

Saturnine Appearances

Western culture has many images of Saturn that have survived from antiquity. These include statues, carvings, and later, paintings. Traditionally, Saturn is depicted as an older man, crooked but muscular. Usually He is heavily bearded. He wears a black chiton, or robe, and in the Latin style His head is shrouded by His toga (see image on p. 66). The shrouding of His head is a rare thing among

divinities, and is thought to symbolize His alien nature, or 'otherness,' and likely also His chthonic nature. In the Republic and Empire, the legs of Saturn's idol were bound with woolen cords, symbolizing the chains of His panoply. He bears a scythe, or alternately a sickle (see images below). In many of the later carvings of Saturn, especially those which emphasize His temporal aspect, He is shown in the act of eating one of His godly offspring (p. 68, p. 118). This grotesque image is something of a misrepresentation, as Saturn's devouring of the gods was not that of a cannibal primarily, but intended as an imprisonment of their essence.



SATURNUS-MALAKBEL (PALMYRA, 2ND C. CE)

Raphael's depiction of Saturn (next page) is quite interesting, as he shows Saturn seated with the toga, bearing the scythe, and riding in a chariot pulled by a pair of serpentine dragons. This calls to memory the images of the Islamic Zuhal, who stands atop a serpent or dragon. As noted previously, here Saturn is not conquering or slaying the dragon; rather, He has leashed the dragon and uses it as His vehicle. This indicates that Saturn is aligned with the chthonic and chaotic forces of His environment, and that they are subject to His control.



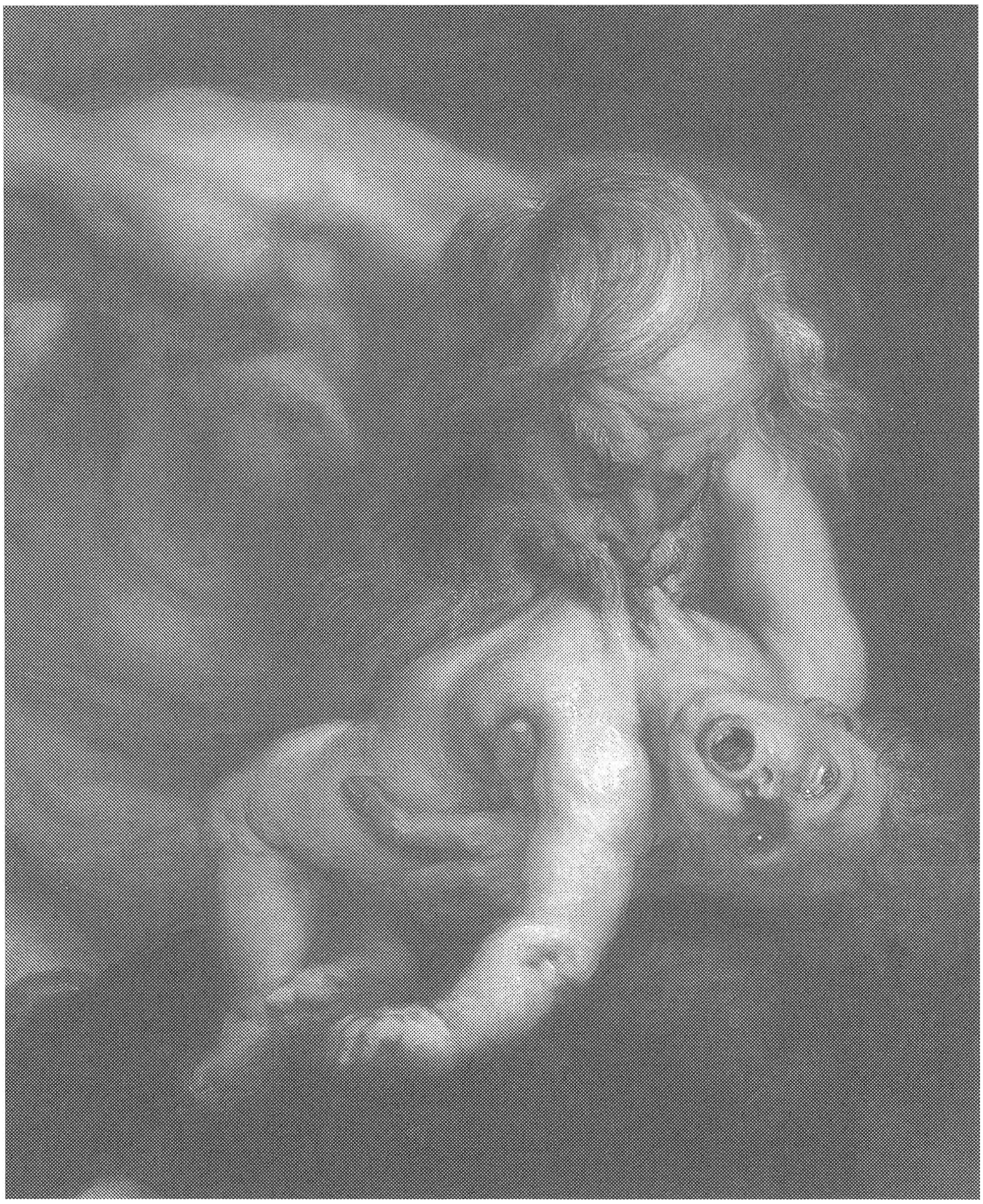
SATURN (18TH C. CE LISINIO, FROM 16TH C. CE RAPHAEL)

Saturn, for the Romans, also manifests as the planetary body, which is named for Him. It is important to note that in Roman culture, there was no distinction between the deity as an anthropomorphic entity, the deity as a concept, or the deity as a planet. Venus, for example, was understood to be love itself, as well as a beautiful woman, and a planet. In a similar vein, Saturn was understood to be a grim grey god in chains in Tartarus, a cosmic principal, and a malevolent planet that caused harm and injury to all that it shone upon. The planet was believed by the Romans to be tremendously inauspicious. Propertius reports in the *Elegiarum* (IV,1,86): *Et graue Saturni sidus in omne caput* (The star of Saturn is heavy on all heads). Likewise, Lucan states in the *Pharsalia* (1,651-652): *Summo si frigida caelo stella nocens nigros Saturni accenderet ignis* (From the cold heavens, the hateful Saturnine star shines brightly).

It is clear that in His planetary form, Saturn was disliked by those who followed astrology, and that His "star" was feared to bring bad luck to all on whom it 'shone.' Saturn's negative astral influence continues to be a theme in Hermetic texts, and finds strong parallels in the Islamic and Indian cults of Saturn. This will be discussed further in Section Two.

The Demiurge Saturn

Saturn, not surprisingly, is a significant figure in the Gnostic religions of the classical period. The term 'Gnostic' refers to a broad group of mystery cults which embraced a common set of terms and ideas, but Gnosticism never became as monolith as the Christian religion, which eventually supplanted and suppressed the Gnostic movement. A very basic summary of the classical Gnostic myth could be stated thusly: in the beginning, there is Primordial Light sometimes called the *pleroma* 'perfect fullness,' or alternately, the *kenoma* 'perfect emptiness.' Beyond the light, there is the darkness of undifferentiated Chaos. From Chaos there emerges a consciousness, the Demiurge ('Divine



DETAIL FROM 'SATURN' BY P. P. RUBENS

Architect') which upon gaining self-awareness, creates six Archons ('spiritual rulers'), to serve as its helpers. Together, the Demiurge and its Archons generate the seven celestial realms, which include the material world as part of the lowest realm. They further create entire populations of divine and angelic beings to fill the seven realms, and eventually create human and animal life on earth. Gnostic tradition suggests that the Demiurge's appearance was, however, an aberration of the natural order, and that the spiritual *pleroma/kenoma* is essentially in opposition to the material cosmos. This being the case, many (not all) Gnostic movements vilified the flesh, and sought to suppress it in order to augment or nourish the spirit. This hatred of the material world may have been borrowed from Christianity, where it likewise exists.

Despite the Hellenistic language used by many Gnostic groups, the Saturnine deity had connections to the Abrahamic religious tradition. The Demiurge, for example, was understood to be the deity who revealed the Torah to Moses, and so the Jewish religion is understood by many Gnostic writers to be thoroughly Demiurgic. This makes sense, especially given the cosmo-centric nature of the Torah, which emphasizes the importance of the material world, and which is largely silent about the spiritual afterlife. Moses is considered to be a Saturnine prophet, a revealer of laws written by the cosmic architect. Christianity, by contrast, is a pleromic religion, in that it suppresses the cosmic nature of the human in favor of 'spiritual' nature.

Many of the classical Gnostic movements identified Saturn with the Demiurge, the cosmic architect. This association occurs explicitly as a result of Saturn's association with the Hermetic or Neo-Platonic rule over the seventh heaven. It also occurs implicitly through Saturn's supposed association with the deity of the Old Testament, which is echoed later in the *Picatrix* tradition that Saturn is lord of the Jews, via their celebration of the Sabbath. These associations are evident when one examines several texts that record Gnostic beliefs. Saturn, as the Demiurge, is called by several names in Gnostic tradition. Most commonly, He is called *Ialdabaoth*, which is Aramaic for 'son *(yald)* of chaos *(baoth)*.' This is a reference to the Gnostic tradition that Saturn emerged from the primordial Chaos, which He later uses to create the cosmos and its creatures. Saturn is also referred to in some more polemical texts as

Saklas ('fool'); and *Samael* ('venomous one of God' or 'blind one of God'), an angelic name known from Hebrew tradition. Less commonly, other texts refer to the Saturnine deity as *Abrasax, Abraxas,* or *Ariael* ('Lion of God').

The Gnostic text entitled "The Origin of the World" directly identifies the seven powers, meaning the Demiurge and six Archons, with the seven planets. It reads:

> Seven appeared in chaos, androgynous. They have their masculine names and their feminine names. The feminine name is Pronoia (Forethought) [and the masculine name is] Sambathas, which is 'week'. And his son is called Yao: his feminine name is Lordship. Sabaoth: his feminine name is Deity. Adonaios: his feminine name is Kingship. Elaios: his feminine name is Jealousy. Oraios: his feminine name is Wealth. And Astaphaios: his feminine name is Sophia (Wisdom). These are the seven forces of the seven heavens of chaos. Now the prime parent Yaldabaoth, since he possessed great authorities, created heavens for each of his offspring through verbal expression - created them beautiful, as dwelling places - and in each heaven he created great glories, seven times excellent. Thrones and mansions and temples, and also chariots and virgin spirits up to an invisible one and their glories, each one has these in his heaven; mighty armies of gods and lords and angels and archangels - countless myriads - so that they might serve.[16]

One also finds Saturn associated directly with Ialdabaoth. The Gnostic text *The Secret Book of John,* for example, identifies Saturn with the planetary realms and the days of the week. It reads:

> Yaldabaoth is the first ruler, who took great power from his mother. Then he left her and moved away from the place where he was born. He took control and created for himself other realms with luminous fire, which still exists. He mated with the mindlessness in him and produced

16 Translated by Hans-Gebhard Bethge and Bentley Layton. Accessed from The Gnostic Society Library at www.gnosis.org/naghamm/origin.html.

> authorities for himself ...Yaldabaoth stationed seven kings, one for each sphere of heaven, to reign over the seven heavens, and five to reign over the depth of the abyss... The rulers created seven powers for themselves... This is the sevenfold nature of the week.[17]

The planetary associations of the seven powers with the seven heavens is apparent in other Gnostic (or anti-Gnostic) works.[18] The Christian author Origen investigated the Ophite Gnostic sect, interviewing its members and reading some of their texts, as part of his research into 'heretical' movements. It is clear both from the actual Gnostic gospels and the writings of such authors as Origen that Saturn and the other six planetary Archons were considered to be the controlling forces of the material cosmos, as well as the creators of material life. Upon death, the soul of the Gnostic initiate was to ascend towards the successive planetary realms, armed with the various passphrases that would allow them to pass through that kingdom. It stands to reason that if one had only learned the first three passphrases, then they would be able to enter the celestial realm of the fourth Archon, but not be able to pass further. By contrast, the soul of a non-initiate would be unable to ascend past even the lowest (lunar) celestial realm, and be forced to reincarnate in the material world. Surprisingly, Origen records some of the (allegedly) Ophite Gnostic incantations used to access the Saturnine realm, ostensibly after death. In his polemical work *Contra Celsum*, he shares some of the Gnostic tradition of the day (6.31):

> Further, if anyone wants to better understand the practices of those magicians, through which arcane secrets they endeavor to mislead people, with mixed success, then listen to the secret teaching which the Gnostics receive after passing through the spiritual gates, which are governed by the archons. At the First Gate, say: Hail, Solitary King! You

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17 Accessed from the Gnostic Society Library at <gnosis.org/naghamm/apocjn-meyer.html>.

18 The reader is encouraged to consult April DeConick's essay 'The Road for the Soul is through the Planets', in A. DeConick, G. Shaw, J. Turner. *Practicing Gnosis: Ritual, Magic, Theurgy and Liturgy in Nag Hammadi, Manichaean and Other Ancient Literature. Essays in Honor of Birger A. Pearson.* (Brill, 2013).

> are the first power, the darkening of sight, utter destruction, upheld by wisdom and foresight, by which I am purified. [...] Hail, lord, let it be so!' At the Second Gate, they shall find Ialdabaoth. Say, 'Hail, Ialdabaoth, first and seventh, fearless, and born to rule. Your mind is clear and pure. You are a perfect son [to Chaos], holding the sigil of life, and opening the sealed gate to your realm. Again I pass through your realm. Peace be upon me, lord, let it be so!' [*translation mine*]

It is important to clarify that while most Gnostic groups considered the Demiurge to be an inferior being to the perfect unity of the pleroma/kenoma, the Saturnine deity (Ialdabaoth) is not an enemy of humanity – indeed, the deity is considered to be the parent of the material cosmos. Most Gnostics, however, in their rejection of the material cosmos, rejected its maker as well, and so He is vilified as being somehow 'stupid' or 'foolish', which is a curious point of view. Indeed, the Saturnine deity is understood to be an emanation of Chaos, but Chaos is the origin of Cosmos in Gnostic thought – it is not at all antagonistic towards it. Cosmic life itself is subject to change (Chaos), it is not the perfect spiritual stasis of the pleroma. Curiously, the Valentinian Gnostics presented a similar but different paradigm, in which the Demiurge rules all the celestial realms except for earth, which is held by a renegade Archon (the Devil). Thus the seven planetary realms are at odds with the earth, and so Saturn is the distant king who seeks to "save" the initiate from the cycle of rebirth. It is rare for Saturn to take on a salvific character, but in this tradition (at least) that is the case.

Descriptions of Ialdabaoth depict him as a great lion-headed serpent, for which reason he is sometimes called 'Ariael' (lion of God). This is clearly a draconic image, and is found on some Gnostic gems and scrolls; this indicates that some magicians of the Hermetic tradition were using the image of the Demiurge as a talisman. As the architect and controller of the material cosmos, the Demiurge and His Archons would be the logical forces to appeal to, in order to create effective change in the world. The idea of appealing to the Archons would have horrified many Gnostics, but Origen nevertheless was able to access and cite the incantations used above, and the frequency of the

lion-serpent image in Hermetic texts and talismans indicates that Origen was not fabricating the idea that some renegade Gnostics rejected the pleromic model, choosing rather to serve the Demiurge than to resist Him.

In summary, the Saturnine deity had a powerful influence on the formation of Gnosticism, though the various Gnostic movements varied considerably on the nature and role of Saturn/Ialdabaoth. It is evident that the Saturnine deity was connected with Chaos, and that He was understood to be an architect and builder of the material realm, its associated celestial heavens, and the inhabitants thereof. The Demiurge was also believed to interact with humans through magic, but also through religious traditions (such as Judaism), and to seek to cultivate a positive relationship with humanity.

■ ■ ■

Saturn in the Indian Tradition

It may be in India alone where the Saturnine cult has survived since ancient times. Master of the planets, Lord Śani (Saturn) remains a prominent deity in Indian religion, astrology, and popular culture. Śani, also called Shaneshwar, has had established temples and devotional practices that go back thousands of years. Unlike the study of the Islamic Zuhal, or the Classical Saturnus, the study of the cult of Lord Śani is not limited to old texts and archaeology; it does not rely on reconstructions, clever theories, or linguistic wrangling. One of the great joys of studying the figure of the Saturnine deity in India is that one gets to examine a living tradition, to visit thriving temples, and to speak to practitioners who have inherited spiritual practices, mantras, and pujas that genuinely can be traced to antiquity in an unbroken line.

All those who follow Indian *jyotisha,* sometimes called Vedic astrology, are aware of the influence of the *navagraha,* Sanskrit for 'nine seizers.' These are the principal planets that are said to control fate, which are Surya (the Sun), Soma (the Moon), Mangala, (Mars), Budha (Mercury), Brihaspati (Jupiter), Shukra (Venus), Śani (Saturn), Rahu and Ketu (the shadow planets). These *grahas* or seizers are understood to be both actual deities, as well as celestial bodies that can be observed. The Indian jyotisha practices were developed very early on, and whether or not they influenced the Classical tradition (evidence suggests not), they absolutely influenced the Islamic tradition to a certain extent.

Lord Śani appears in a number of Hindu texts, both ancient and contemporary, usually in conjunction with the other navagraha. The best known text dedicated solely to him is the *Śani Mahatmya*, which was adapted into English by jyotisha scholar and practitioner, Dr. Robert Svoboda, as *The Greatness of Saturn: A Therapeutic Myth*. Śani has also been the subject of other more recent studies, such as Liz Greene's *Saturn: A New Look at an Old Devil* (1976) and David Knipe's "Softening the Cruelty of God: Folklore, Ritual, and the Planet Śani (Saturn) in Southeast India" (1996). The titles of these three works by Svoboda, Greene, and Knipe are very telling: they suggest that Śani is a glorious being *(mahatma)*, but that He has a very dark nature ("devil", "cruel"). Hinduism, perhaps better than other religious systems, seems able to reconcile some seemingly contradictory traits in its deities, so that a god or goddess is at once both gentle and savage, kindly and sadistic. In Western culture, this might be seen as a kind of dualism, but Hindu scholars have long taught that divine beings – devas and asuras – are considerably more complex than mortals. Śani is an exemplary deity when it comes to the personification of both misfortune, even cruelty, but strangely also mercy for those who show Him the appropriate respect.

Indian traditions generally hold that Śani is the greatest of the malefic entities. In fact, contemporary Hindu tradition goes even further – Śani is said to be evil. Knipe (232) discusses this crux in detail:

> Being planets and rulers of days, [Śani, Rahu, and Ketu] are transcendent sources of evil. But more importantly, this is a religion that prizes devotion above all other avenues to salvation. Demons, even if worshipped, praised, and adored, are still unpredictable. Gods and goddesses, on the other hand, are often amenable to devotional contracts and thrive on human advances from which demons shrink. Śani is malevolent, cruel, even harsh, but fair. 'He is the same for everyone,' is a much used phrase in Telugu. The dark planet (as well as all the others) is endowed with a personality, physique and biography, and the status of devata allows him to be approached, albeit cautiously, worshipped, and in a few cases even elevated to a personal deity.

> Interestingly, having acceded to this personification of evil, the worshipper of Śani proceeds to reinforce his negative features, as if it were incumbent upon humans to valourize that which they fear. The prince of darkness, deified, is nourished by the essence of darkness, black. What is given to Śani is said to be something *priya*, dear to him, beloved by him, the colour black, his colour, things of iron, his metal, and above all the brown oil of sesame (taila) or the unhusked sesame seeds themselves (tila, Telugu nuvvulu). Therefore gifts to this crude, recondite presence reinforce his interior qualities – darkness, slowness, tenacity, a sinewy strength – even as they remind devotees of the death they desire to postpone.

Nevertheless, Śani is not worshipped exclusively as a malevolent and destructive force, but also a deity who is capable of great benevolence. In the *Śani Mahatmya,* despite all the suffering the various mortals and immortals suffer, Śani's black influence ultimately leaves them in a better state, even if that state is one of death. It must be remembered that in the Dharmic religions which accept a view of reincarnation, it is better to die (and be reborn) than to continue a life accruing bad karma, which would result in a negative rebirth.

Readers may want to recall here the story of the King and his 72 nobles from the curious Islamic text, the *Kitab al-Ustuwwatas* discussed in Chapter One.

Saturnine Theophany

Śani's biography is revealing. His father is Surya, the solar deity, while His mother is Chaya, a goddess of shadow, and an emanation – literally, the shadow (Skt. *chaya*) – of the goddess Saranya, a cloud deity. As the son of deities that represent the sun and darkness, Śani Himself becomes a nocturnal solar deity, sometimes called the Black Sun.[19] Śani combines elements of both aspects, as He has the blasting glare of a sun god, but His light is inverted into darkness.

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19 Lucan, *Pharsalia* (I,651-652): *summo si frigida caelo stella nocens nigros Saturni accenderet ignis.* "From the cold heavens, the hateful Saturnine star shines brightly."

Śani is the brother of the death god, Yama, and so He is associated with death and has a chthonic function. Indian textual and popular tradition holds that His *guna* (nature) is darkness (Skt. *tamas*), and this is not merely His internal humors, since even His coloring is black or cobalt. The *Yavanajataka* (135-136) describes His appearance having:

> Brown, inscrutable eyes. He is strong, but his head hangs down and his limbs tremble. He is **tall** and **has thick, rough and dreadful hair,** and **nails** and **teeth** which are discoloured and broken. He is **mean and very irascible;** his actions are evil. Accustomed to **hatred**, He is a **malicious** master. In his black garments and looking like [collyrium], thin and lazy [Shanaiscara] has abandoned joy. His essence is of **sinew**.[20]

Śani's description in the *Śani Mahatmya* is strikingly similar. The translation reads:

> Lord Saturn is **tall,** black, long-limbed and emaciated, with reddish-brown eyes, **large teeth** and **nails,** prominent veins, a sunken stomach, a long beard, **matted locks,** and profuse course, stiff body hair. He is **lame** and his limbs are rigid; his constitution is [**cold and dry**]. Intensely **harsh**, he is **cruel** in authority, and his gaze, which is directed downward, is utterly terrifying.

Further,

> [Saturn is] Lord of the **sinews** and nerves, of the west, of Saturday, and of the constellations Capricorn and Aquarius, he is also known as the **Slow**, Son of Shadow, the Angular, the Black, the Endless, the End Causer, the All-Devouring, the Steady, the Controller, the Famished, and the Emaciated.

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20 David Pingree, 'Representation of the Planets in Indian Astrology,' Indo-Iranian Journal, 8:249-67, in Knipe 217.

Using the technique of repetition, which has been employed above in the Islamic section, there are certain patterns that appear (marked in bold). Saturn is tall, sinewy, rough of appearance, and His personality is malicious, cruel, even evil. He appears to be a grim and unforgiving lord. We note also that Śani is restrained in His movements (lame), and that He is Himself a force of restraint. He is said to be slow, and his nature is cold. Clearly, there are some strong parallels between the Indian understanding of Saturn, and the way in which the Classical and Islamic cultures understood the same deity.

Śani's titles say much about his role in Indian religion. As noted previously, these include the Endless, the End Causer, the All-Devouring, the Steady, and the Controller. In Vedic astrology, Saturn serves as the great malefic, the bringer of ill-fortune. In all the texts, it is His gaze that is feared. When He was born, His gaze fell on His father, causing an eclipse. The *Śani Mahatmya* provides several brief anecdotes where Śani's gaze struck various deities, causing them great harm – even the greatest deities, such as Shiva and Rama, are not exempted from Śani's power. According to astrology, as Saturn passes through the horoscope of each person, it is said that His glance falls on them, which invariably brings trauma of some degree. Saturn may perpetually afflict a person due to a negative situation on their horoscope, which is termed *Śanidosa*. But Saturn also afflicts *all* people, as His planet transits through the constellations, and so when eventually His power comes to rest on a person, it is said to last 7 ½ years.[21] The bigger the amount of bad karma (or sin, if that concept is easier to grasp) the person has accrued, the greater their suffering is likely to be. A saint or mystic may suffer as much as a criminal or materialistic person, but it is thought to be less likely for this to happen, as the saint/mystic will generally have better karmas.



Śani (ms Lagnacandrika)

That said, Śani's devotees are unapologetic for His influence, and even tragedies such as the

21 Readers interested in a more extensive view on *Śanidosa* are advised to consult a jyotisha textbook, as this work is primarily a comparative study.

death of an innocent child will be understood as the result of Śani's black gaze. Further, Śani's malevolence is not always personalized as the misfortune of a single person. Knipe (221) states:

> A description [...] of the effect of Śani's dominance over a year is similarly brutal: drought, crop failures, dust storms, diseases and famine are continuous. In these chapters, *Śani is cosmic malevolence*. Everything disgusting, debased or inauspicious, from rivers and regions to plants and animals is ruled by Śani [*italics mine, for emphasis*].

Śani is thus a bringer of chaos, of suffering and trauma on a cosmic level. His black gaze can see piercingly to afflict a single person, but also an entire region can suffer if He wishes so. In many ways, the only difference between Śani and a demon *(raksasa)* is that Śani can be negotiated with, propitiated, and mollified. Unlike the demon, He absolutely cannot be compelled, and His vengeance is said to be terrible if He is aggravated.

Such aggravations can and do occur. There are many times when a spiritual tradition or teacher needs to convey certain difficult or complex truths and lessons, but they simply cannot be effectively conveyed as abstract concepts or raw information. Rather, they are best expressed through a narrative, which encodes the subtleties and nuances that a student will grasp as part of a story. Such stories are often culture-centric, and even deeply tied to a language. In a similar way, the same is true for even secular narratives. Take Shakespeare, for example – no one would dare to argue that his works are as accessible or as meaningful when read in Russian or Chinese, because much of his humor and meaning is rooted in the popular culture of his day, and also in the 'street language' of $16^{th}/17^{th}$ century England. Even to native speakers of English today, some (much?) of Shakespeare's meaning is lost. The same is all the more true for the ancient religious texts – the Torah or Quran or Vedas are no longer truly 'themselves' once they are translated, and it is dangerously naive to argue otherwise. Yet a diligent, careful reading of a translation can still yield tremendous amounts of information, especially if one takes time to understand the history and context of the source culture. This is not to suggest that one cannot

use translations to learn spiritual lessons, only that one must be very cautious in how one goes about such a study.

In the case of Śani, the traditional tale *Śani Mahatmya* communicates to its reader certain truths about Lord Śani. With the obligatory warning given that we are discussing a text in translation, it would be helpful to provide an overview of the nature of this story, because it allows considerable insight into how the devotees of Lord Śani view the deity.[22]

The tale begins with King Vikrama, the just ruler of Ujjayini, who had gathered many religious sages and scholars to his court. On one fateful day, the King sponsors a colloquium in which the various priests of the nine planetary deities *(navagaraha)* debated which of the nine was supreme. It will come as no surprise that each of the priests asserted the superiority of their own divine patron, and so a lively discussion took place. But when it came to the *pandita* (scholar) of the Saturnine deity, King Vikrama was obliged to hear a rather gloomy and austere discussion on the generally unfavorable nature and cruel personality of Lord Śani. The King was troubled by the pandita's words, and when the colloquium ended, Vikrama mused aloud that Saturn was a truly awful being, as much a bane to his own people as to his enemies. Yet as fate would have it, Śani was passing overhead at that moment and heard the insult. Descending to earth, He confronted King Vikrama and turned His black gaze on him, cursing him to suffer until he had atoned for insulting the deity. Indeed, thereafter King Vikrama lost everything – his home, his sovereignty, his dignity – as Lord Śani's wrath pursued him, grinding him lower and lower into the dirt. Eventually, after seven and a half years, when King Vikrama had paid the full measure of his folly, Lord Śani restored him to his former glory. Vikrama begged the Saturnine deity to never again torment another living being as He had tormented the king. Śani replies by telling Vikrama about the various deities who have suffered under His black gaze. Nevertheless, at the king's prayer, Śani agrees to spare anyone the worst of His power if they read this sacred legend *(Śani Mahatmya)* on Saturdays, and performed devotional

22 The abridged version of the narrative relies on Svoboda's retelling of the *Śani Mahatmya*.

activities for Śani on Saturday. The text provides a list of examples of activities which are pleasing to this terrifying deity.

This tale is very efficient, because it has two major sections that relate to Saturn. First, the pandita's lecture on Lord Śani is quite detailed, providing an overview of the background of the god's birth, His nature, His appearance, areas of influence, and the rites by which He is worshipped. Second, it demonstrates in vivid detail how even the rich and powerful are vulnerable to Śani's influence. In other words, if a just and righteous king such as Vikrama can be harmed by Śani, or worse, if Śani afflicts even the other gods, then the reader understands that mere mortals are utterly helpless before so terrifying a being. There is no escape – in time, all fall under Śani's influence. This tale, however, is not entirely hopeless. It makes very clear that Śani's influence, once accepted, can be mitigated through particular actions and practices which are relatively easy to perform, even for very marginalized people. Moreover, if one actually welcomes Lord Śani's influence, then the trauma of His gaze becomes a purification which alleviates the worshipper of the negative karmas (spiritual attachments) which they have accumulated.

Saturnine Magical Practices

In order to show Lord Śani the proper respect, and to undertake those practices by which one is able to mitigate *Śanidosa*, a devotee must be aware of His attributes and preferred materials. Śani's colors are black, blue, and sometimes dark grey and dark brown. The sapphire is His sacred stone, and so His devotees will often be seen to wear sapphire jewelry of some kind. The metal sacred to Saturn is iron, and so His idols *(murtis)* are sometimes simple iron nails; devotees might also wear iron jewelry, such as a chain or bracelet. As with most Hindu deities, Śani is identified with several animals that serve as His *vahana* (vehicle or mount). The most prominent is the crow, a black and ugly bird. In many cultures, the crow is perceived (perhaps correctly) as a bird of ill-omen. Other vehicles are the tortoise, the buffalo, and rarely, the elephant. These latter three animals are all sluggish, ponderous animals, and very resilient.

As mentioned above, unlike the cults of Zuhal and Saturn/Cronos, which survive largely in memory, the cult of Śani is very much a living institution.

Śani even enjoys a small but visible presence in Indian media and cinema. In the Indian region of Kuchanoor, Śani is worshipped as the primary deity, and has a prominent temple, Kuchanur Suyambu Sri Saneeswara Bhagavan, which is open to the public for visitation. At such places, devotees will perform religious practices, and also request that professional clergy *(brahmins)* perform Śani worship *(pujas)* on their behalf, usually to negate a perceived Śanidosa or other malefic influence. For those who cannot visit a temple due to distance, Śani products and pujas are widely available on the internet today.

As an example, a popular yantra-vending site advertises the power of Lord Śani's yantra, saying:

> When it is creating positive impact by being positioned in a benefic state, this Yantra stimulates it to get further favorable, and when it is creating negative impact by being positioned in a malefic state, this Yantra neutralizes it and eventually eliminates it. The bottom-line of this influence is to please Saturn, and turn it favorable for its host. In astrological beliefs, a malefic Saturn is unparalleled to the malefic state of any other planet in the entire planetary system. It speaks length for the intensity of adversity it has on someone when it is malefic. Usually, one faces lots of obstacles and there are failures in all aspects. Almost everything, which should otherwise be going up, scales down. Its ill-effect can also be sensed with the increased frequency of health problems, which can sometimes get too chronic to heal. Śani Yantra has been observed, approved, and recommended by astrology for such cases, including for situations when Saturn is in transit or is causing the long-term 'Saadesati' effect. Other Benefits Possession of Śani Yantra confers one with success in profession or business and all worldly comforts. Also, it helps one rise higher and higher to eventually reach and sustain on top of the scale.[23]

It is clear from reading this description that the yantra-crafter is not merely

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23 http://www.kaalsarpdosh.com/aapkikundli/shop/yantra-for-business-growth/shani-yantra

emphasizing the negative or adversarial aspects of Saturn, but also suggesting that Saturn can turn bad luck into good fortune, and assist with the daily and worldly needs of His devotee.

Some Śani practices *(bhakti)* can be performed privately. As Śani is held to be a shadow deity, it is advised to perform them in secret, as this is more pleasing to the deity. Examples of long-standing Śani bhakti includes:

- Giving charity on Saturday, especially of black grain or sugar.
- Caring for ugly or ill-favored trees, especially on Saturday.
- Reciting the *Śani Mahatmya* story on Saturday.
- Reciting Śani's mantra daily: *Om Sham Shri Sanaischaraya Namah,* and especially on Saturday.
- Wearing an iron nail, or other iron jewelry.
- Wearing a ring or pendant with a sapphire.

While any of these practices can be performed on a daily basis, the majority are held to be considerably more potent if performed on Saturday, as that day is sacred to Him.

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Section Two

Saturnine Gnosis

The Spiritual Path

The reader should be well aware that since the 19th century, there has been a tremendous surge of interest in the paranormal. This may be the result of anthropology seriously examining the beliefs and practices of many new spiritual systems that traditional European schools had previously dismissed as superstition. In any case, the contemporary seeker of the mysteries faces a considerable number of schools, systems, and traditions, which claim to offer esoteric truths to their respective students. Many of these traditions originally centered in (e.g.) Asia or Africa now have considerable international followings, and a diverse body of practitioners that includes people of all ages, genders, and professional or educational backgrounds. Some are clearly charlatans, without any clear credentials, offering instant wealth, power, or love-spells in exchange for 'donations' by way of PayPal. Others, more genuine, have spent decades painstakingly finding a qualified teacher, able to transmit to them gradually the complex body of practices necessary to undertake and experience the magic of the tradition. Some, even many of the traditions make exclusive claims to truth – their teacher is 'the best,' their deity is supreme, and their path is better than all the others. Others, perhaps better versed in the wide world of the occult, realize that while there may not be many spiritual masters alive today, there *are* some genuine teachers within reach, if you take the time to seek.

One of the saddest developments in 20th century occultism was the rise of the new traditions promising apotheosis. This topic is delicate, but needs to be addressed nonetheless. Some occult traditions really do have secret knowledge, and some occultists are capable of genuine magic. Of this, there is no question. Magic has its limits, like any force, and these are often due to the limitations of the magician. Few traditional masters would argue this point. Further, almost all of the traditional occult arts have acknowledged the existence of supernatural entities, with whom magicians can and do traffic. In no text or tradition were these entities ever considered as 'archetypes' or 'projections' of a magician's will.

Yet somehow, with the appearance of figures like Aleister Crowley, an increasing number of occultists have arisen, claiming to be master magicians, or more, deities. Some schools purport to be able to teach someone to become a deity while they are still physically incarnate. Such claims are alarming because (a) they lack any substantial or measurable evidence, and (b) the self-professed masters who claim to sell miracles seem strangely unable to direct their own lives. Worse yet, such figures have created fast-food schools of the occult which have relegated gods and elementals to nothing more than wish-fulfilling genies, rather than powerful and self-existing entities which traditionally demand respect and sacrifice.

Above all, this should be understood: power is not free. The word 'empowerment' is thrown around liberally by many who seem to think that demons can be conjured and bullied into following orders. That is hubris. One might suggest that the pig who is fed daily by the farmer probably feels 'empowered,' but the pig will never become a farmer, even though it might eat the scraps that come from the farmer's table. I am not saying that spiritual evolution is not possible, but it is dangerous to think that one can declare oneself a master, or a deity, by virtue of acquiring some magical skill. Demanding favors or power from spirits is a dangerous game, and may not result in the 'ascension' that many expect to find. By thinking that gods or spirits are projections or egregores, one runs the very serious risk of falling into this trap. One might discover after death that if the power has not been paid for, the magician will be consumed in payment. It is better to enter into dealings with spirits or gods

with an open and intelligent attitude, trusting that if such entities are willing to communicate and assist the magician, they will not do so for free. Spiritual beings have their own agendas, and the wise magician recognizes this and acts accordingly.

Are spiritual beings actually interested in human spiritual evolution? Certainly, this is a prevailing belief in the greater occult community, but what evidence supports this? If the majority of contemporary masters are actually able to summon gods or devils for purposes of self-aggrandizement, then why are they equally often struggling to meet their own material or social needs? Worse, why are they selling materials offering to teach skills that they do not themselves seem to possess? This is not to say that all masters are charlatans – far from it. Those who claim to teach, and profit from teaching, are often suspiciously lacking in credibility. A simple Google search will show as much. But good teachers are nevertheless a great blessing, and if one can find a genuine spiritual teacher, they can offer a great wealth of techniques and suggestions, and certainly in some cases, the transmission of gnosis. This cannot and should not be disputed.

Choosing a Spiritual Path

When one decides to select a spiritual tradition, they need to ask themselves what they hope to gain from embarking on the spiritual quest. If someone has come to believe in magic, and wishes to gain greater control over their life and personal circumstances, all well and good, but Vajrayana Buddhism may not be the path for them. Equally, if someone wishes to establish a daily practice leading to profound inner tranquility, Vajrayana may indeed be the path they are searching for. Is the seeker committed to a deeper connection with the Supreme Being, and content in simple yet profound devotional practices? Then Sufism or Bhakti Yoga may be good choices. Not all esoteric traditions actually teach magic, but this does not mean that they are any less valid. Magic is a valid skill to wish to learn, but similar to a competitive sport, it takes time, practice, and a certain degree of innate ability. Many esoteric paths do not require any skill with magic, and can still lead their initiate to very profound spiritual realizations.

One should select a spiritual path with care, and not without weighing the risks and benefits associated with that path. If a tradition is associated with a particular deity or family of spiritual entities, one needs to know if one is comfortable with the requirements of the tradition. This holds especially true if one accepts the existence of the gods or spiritual intelligences as genuine phenomena. In the same way that one might accept or reject a position of employment based on one's understanding or knowledge of one's potential superior in the organization, one needs to assess whether the spiritual patrons of a particular system represent the values and ambitions one seeks. This is a process that requires serious reflection in both the head and the heart. On the one hand, it is true that 'you know when you know' the right teacher or spiritual current, because you should feel it in your gut. On the other hand, one needs to do one's reading, consult books, speak to other knowledgeable teachers or students, and try to understand what aligning with a particular current or school entails. If everyone belonging to the school lives a very stable and happy life - this suggests something about the teaching and energy of that current. If the initiates of a particular current are struggling with substance abuse and frequent run-ins with law enforcement, it suggests something else entirely about the nature of the energy behind this particular current.

One also needs to carefully consider the rules and practices of a spiritual current. In many traditional African currents, for example, blood sacrifice is normal and necessary. A student who balks at such things will not last long, or not be accepted. This applies to all major religions – if someone is really against animal sacrifice, then Islam (and its associated Sufi orders) could be a bad choice as a religion, given the annual *Eid al Kbir* sacrifices. That is not to say that spiritual and cultural norms cannot be re-evaluated periodically, but cherry picking is best avoided, if one seeks to truly integrate into a spiritual current that embraces and endorses such practices.

There is also the question of how one becomes part of a living esoteric tradition. This is a tricky topic, with some sharply divided opinions and much could (and should) be said about it. While the scope of the present work will not allow us to elaborate on this matter too much, we want to quickly state our own position as far as it relates to the gnosis found within this book. To become a

devotee of Saturn, no formal initiation is required. The information in this work, for example, provides more than enough insight into the role and nature of the Saturnine deity for someone drawn to its current to establish a meaningful devotional relationship with it. Such a devotional solitary relationship may develop into an elaborate personal cultus of Saturn and the deity may bestow great insights and powers. However, if one seeks the most complete Saturnine transformation, the guidance of a genuine master or teacher becomes indispensable. Not only will such a master provide important tools and techniques which have been acquired and tested over many generations, but more importantly, he will act as the 'physician of the heart.' Such a master has little in common with the usual western esoteric teacher who is at best an esoteric college tutor and at worst a fraudulent pretender and hoarder of empty titles and degrees. The physician of the heart is the master who establishes a deeply individual relationship with the student and removes the spiritual debris and confusion from the soul so that the initiate becomes the perfect soil for the divine (in this case Saturnian) energies. The powers or conditions which rule our everyday consciousness are so strong and deceptive that it is impossible for us to bypass all their traps and tricks which they have implemented to remain in control of the profane I. While we may be able to have success in following ritual instructions or even have great spiritual visions and experiences through our devotional relationship with the deity, they will remain to a degree fractured or isolated: To fully replace "the I of day-consciousness with the I of night-consciousness" as David Beth states so well, we need to establish the sacred bond with a genuine teacher. Only through this process of mirroring, mentoring and monitoring, the soul can become a perfect mirror for the Saturnian energies enabling the initiate to manifest the whole range of their powers.

Trafficking with spirits in itself can be of course highly problematic. Entities which claim to be benevolent or auspicious may not actually be so. In a sense, one is actually fortunate if a spirit admits up front that it is not auspicious or kindly – that is better than finding out the hard way. One may be pledged to a spirit, serve it devotedly, and yet find at the end of the long road that it has all been for naught. This is where the grimoire tradition is very helpful, insofar as

it is one thing to receive 'gnosis' from something claiming to be Lilith which indeed conforms to the generous surviving traditions of Lilith, whereas it is more risky to pledge oneself to some spirit which has no persona or cultus to be researched. The reader is likely aware of the many different cults dedicated to supposedly ancient spirits (like Lilith), which under scrutiny bear no resemblance at all to the ancient deities in question. Personal gnosis is good, but it's even better when it matches the practices of the original cultists to at least some degree. When people assert that they speak to a Lilith, who claims to be a kindly fertility goddess, it's evident that they are being deceived by something that is clearly masquerading to take advantage of their ignorance. *Caveat cultor.* A large reason for writing this particular study is to provide a resource on the Saturnine deity, so that readers are better able to recognize and identify His presence, if they might encounter it.

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The Saturnine Deity: Analysis

The most complex question that this study addresses is this: who – or what – is the Saturnine deity? The First Section explored three major cults of that black planet, namely Classical, Islamic, and Indian. These choices were not exclusive, because the Saturnine deity appears in many cultures. Some ancient star-gazing civilizations, such as Babylon and Egypt, demonstrated awareness of the dark star. Other cultures, such as the Celts and Germans, had their own analogues in figures like Balor and Ymir. The dark grandfather of gods and mortals is a character that appears in most Indo-European mythologies. Balor, the Saturnine figure in Old Irish tradition, is a terrible, cyclopean monster, one of the demonic invaders who attempts to conquer Ireland. He is said to rule a race of demons *(formoire)* from a magical glass tower on Inis Tor. Balor's gaze instantly slays anyone that He looks upon, and so He must keep His eye closed at all times. His tyranny is ended when His grandson (Lugh) kills Him in

battle. The esoteric adept David Beth has also pointed out important Saturnian aspects of the Germanic Wodan which show parallels to Cronos:

> Wodan as a ruler of the dead is well established but as the God of the ecstatic he also keeps a close relationship with the living. His bi-polar nature encompasses both the world of the dead and realm of the living and his devotees are pulled towards him in moments of ecstatic rapture and transport. This magical magnetism was called Eros of the Distance by the philosopher Ludwig Klages. In the Fraternitas Borealis Wodan is addressed as the 'Innermost' and the 'Outermost'. Chained in magical sleep, He is the God in the mountain (to which he draws the visionary dreamers) but He is also the roaming God in the outer spheres, the eternal wanderer.[24]

Of course, Saturn is not merely an Indo-European figure, or even an Indo-Semitic figure. The Saturnine deity appears in the mythologies and religious systems of other ancient cultures. The Aztecs, for example, revered Him as Tezcatlipoca, the Black Sun, a generally malevolent deity, hobbled by virtue of a missing foot which was sometimes replaced by a black mirror or serpent. Tezcatlipoca, like Śani and Saturn, was for some time considered a major god of the Aztec empire, though His reign was challenged by His brother (rather than son). The worship of Tezcatlipoca demanded daily human sacrifice, for which the Aztec empire remains infamous today. He is a paradoxical figure who is both solar and chthonic in the same moment, much like Lord Śani. Curiously, He wears bells arrayed like chains.

Next, there is the Vodou deity Baron Samedi, who belongs to the Guedhe family of Vodou Gods who embody the powers of death and fertility. He has a chaotic and irascible character with lewd, gallows humor. The Baron dresses in black, and Saturday (Samedi) is sacred to Him. Liminal places like crossroads and graveyards are his territory. He is a popular deity for those in need of special magical assistance. In the esoteric voudon work of David Beth and

24 David Beth in a letter to the author.

the Société Voudon Gnostique, it is another member of the Guedhe family, Ghuedhe Nibbho who rules the Saturnian sphere. Not unlike Wodan in the Fraternitas Borealis, He is a deity connected to both the dead and the living. Within the cultus He oversees the spiritual death and resurrection of the initiate as a living dead, which frees the cultist from the ruling order of the cosmos.[25]

This list is meant to demonstrate that the Saturnine deity does exist in other cultures and systems beyond those covered in Section One. Having looked at several cultural manifestations of Him, it is clear that there are serious and consistent parallels. At this point, it is good to consider why those parallels exist. One possibility is that all the myths come from a common cultural source. This possibility would make sense if the cultures were all in close contact, which they were not. Also, if they shared a common site of origin for the Saturn character, we would expect to find that ALL (or more) of the deities show similar traits, when they clearly do not. Indra and Jupiter may be *like* Thor, and they do share a common Indo-European origin as thunder deities, but Indra is not Jupiter, and Jupiter is *not* Thor. They do not look the same, dress the same, or have the same icons apart from the storm.

One must next consider the possibility of trade routes, because stories and myths can travel, but it would be very odd for merchants to spread stories about a displaced, hostile deity, instead of the more popular cultural deities. Another possibility is that Saturn somehow represents a visible phenomenon or archetype. However, it is extremely hard to explain why multiple cultures would imagine the same displaced and alien deity, which has the same peculiar traits as lameness, chaos, dark colors, cold nature, chains, a connection to the seventh day of the week, and a presence or gaze which causes harm or death. If Saturn could be reduced to an archetype, then we would expect to see even greater parallels for solar and lunar deities – but strangely, those parallels do not generally exist.

We are left then with one logical explanation: that the Saturnine deity appears in multiple mythologies with the same characteristics because the

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25 From a private correspondence with David Beth.

entity is *real*. Saturn is not only an archetype or a fable, but instead an actual deity (or planetary intelligence, or power) with which various cultures have made contact, and its common appearance among those cultures is evidence of its genuine existence.

Of course, the Saturnine deity does not merely manifest in ancient mythology, but also in the consciousness of more modern thinkers. The great British author J. R. R. Tolkien created two primary villains for Middle Earth: Morgoth and Sauron. While these figures appear imaginary, Tolkien was a noted historian and linguist, and based much of his writing on actual mythology. Morgoth is the black tyrant, the general who seeks to enslave all of earth and humanity. He claims to be the "master of the fates of Arda." Garbed all in black, he fights a war against the Valar (gods) for control of the cosmos. His weapon is not the sword or spear, but a heavy hammer named Grond ("grinder"). In that war, he is injured in his leg, and walks afterwards with a limp. Later he is exiled into the void of night, but will return someday to continue the battle. Morgoth is succeeded by his lieutenant, Sauron, whose symbol is the burning eye, and whose gaze is said to be injurious. The point here is not that Morgoth or Sauron are real entities, but that the Saturnine deity is such a powerful and menacing figure that when Tolkien was drafting the great fantasy epic of the 20th century, he chose deliberately to make the chief antagonist an utterly, entirely Saturnine character.

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In Section One, one of the techniques that proved useful is the search for points of repetition. In simple language, some of the traits of the deity will be culturally-specific: that is expected and unavoidable. However, other traits of the deity may prove common to several cultures, and those are the aspects that it will prove interesting to focus on. By compiling those universal or common traits, we will be able to better understand the true nature of the Saturnine deity.

Darkness

In *every* instance of the Saturnine deity, there is a profound connection between the deity and darkness. Darkness can be black, grey, or sometimes

cobalt blue. These symbolic colors are echoed in the clothing of the deity, the color of the deity's skin, the color of the deity's idol, the color of the deity's preferred offerings and sacrifices, and the descriptions of the deity's nature. One should wonder, what does darkness signify? In terms of semiotics, darkness is usually connected with night, death, taboo, the unknown, and with the chthonic realms. Darkness is very rarely a positive indicator of a deity – it is not impossible for it to be so, but much more often darkness is indicative (and evocative) of sinister energies. More importantly, in those cultures described in this book in detail (Classical, Indian, Islamic), the color black is absolutely chthonic – it is connected with the underworld, and with negative forces. Even the images of the Saturnine deity are connected with darkness, be it through the obscuring of his face by the toga, or the darkness of his idol (a black obelisk or cube).

Trauma

The Saturnine deity is a source of injury. Almost every culture which recognizes Saturn considers him the great malefic. Saturn hurts people, He causes pain and suffering, and the text suggests that He enjoys causing this pain. For the Islamic and Roman magicians, there is nothing redemptive about the trauma brought by Saturn. The Saturnine deity injures because it *can* injure, or perhaps, because it *likes* to injure, or because it injures *compulsively*. The Indian tradition agrees that Saturn causes great harm, but tries to find some meaning in the suffering, even if the suffering results in death. Celtic culture, like Indian culture, connects the trauma Saturn inflicts to his black gaze – that somehow the act of Saturn seeing a person is the cause of injury. Overall, this aspect of Saturn is the most hated and feared of all his traits: Saturn *is* pain. However, all three great cultures also agree that Saturnine trauma can be predicted and mitigated.

Chains

Saturn is deeply connected with maiming and imprisonment. In all the cultures noted here, the deity is either injured, or lame, or chained in some way. His movement is impaired. Simultaneously, He is the god of restraint, of

limitation and chaining. The reason for the maiming or chaining, curiously, is often related to some conflict: Saturn/Cronos is chained in adamantine fetters, Śani is wounded, while Zuhal is lame without reason, and Tezcatlipoca's foot is replaced by a black mirror or serpent. The Classical tradition goes the furthest by banishing the Saturnine deity to Tartarus, the black netherworld beneath the world of the dead. Saturn's chains are themselves used in magical spells as a device, used to restrain other people. Saturn limits people, enterprises, nations, and forces of nature.

Time

The Saturnine deity is said to be 'ancient,' 'old,' or 'eternal.' As you will remember, the Greeks in particular called him 'Chronos' and syncretized him together with the personification of time. This connection of Cronos to time *(chronos)* is not merely Greek – the Romans acknowledged that Saturn was a divinity of time, and the Saturnine deity seems to have had a connection with time also in Islamic literature. It is well known that the Kaaba itself was the house of idols in Mohamed's time, and so the Black Stone was very likely the icon representing the pagan deity *Dahr* (time). There is a peculiar verse in the Quran which says: *And they say: 'There is nothing but our life in this world: We die and we live and nothing destroys us except time.' And they have no knowledge of it, they only conjecture'* (Qur'an 45:24). Mohamed is said to have later told his companions, 'Do not curse Time, for Time is Allah.' In English, it sounds as though Mohamed was simply attributing the power of fate to Allah, but in Arabic, the verse infers that the deity whom the Arabs revered as 'Time' was in fact the original chief deity of the Kaaba. Time is an entropic force which eventually destroys all things, even stars and suns. As noted previously, Saturn is considered an agricultural deity, but this is primarily because He is the harvest time, the reaper, which brings an end to all things. This is connected to His death aspect (see below).

Cold

In several traditions, Saturn's star/planet is said to be cold. This is referring to His essence or 'humor,' according to the medical wisdom of the Greeks and Indians. Coldness can be a reference to age, to sluggishness, but also to the

darker half of the year and the northern direction. It is curious that the Winter Solstice (21 December) falls in the middle of the Saturnalia week, and that the festival is celebrated in the coldest month of the year. In Indo-European mythology, the predominant belief was that the initial state of the black primordial Chaos was cold, and even after the appearance of the cosmos, the cold continues to be associated with darkness, the north, and hostile forces. Cold is associated with death, the chill of the grave, the underground (basements, mines, ruins), and the underworld.

Disruption

The Saturnine deity is a disruptive being, no less so because He is a projection of the primordial Chaos. His energy is not conducive to a normal, healthy society. The Saturnalia best demonstrates the wildness and social revolt that Saturn's presence brings when it is unrestrained. Saturn not only causes suffering, but He also brings social unrest and turmoil. The Saturnine deity does not merely trouble individuals, but also entire regions, even the heavens. Several of the traditions relate that the other planets fear Saturn, and that He disrupts their powers and operations. Saturn's chaos is not always destructive, however, as the Saturnalia festival was not considered a hateful or negative thing – it was genuinely celebrated. Saturn sometimes exhibits a certain gallows humor, it is said, as demonstrated well by the bawdy and ribald humor of Baron Samedi.

Ancestor

This trait is somewhat curious, but both Islamic tradition and Classical tradition identify Saturn as an ancestor figure. The Romans held that (chthonic) Saturn is an ancestor figure of the Italic people, which the Gauls echoed for themselves in identifying Saturn as Dis Pater. The Greek "Cronos' Mill" incantation addresses Cronos as "ancestor", and the Islamic incantation to summon a manifestation of Zuhal addresses him as "father and lord." This suggests that several of the cultures (Greeks, Romans, Arabs) identified Zuhal as having a divine connection to them, not unlike how Zeus and Odin are thought to have been ancestor figures to famous lines of kings and heroes. It should be remembered that while the Arab text addresses Zuhal as "father," Arabic often uses

the term 'father' and 'mother' for grandparents.[26] Saturn is not a father deity so much as an *ancestor* deity. That is to say that His cultists did not address Him usually as father as a Christian addresses "God the Father." Rather, Saturn is addressed as an ancient and hoary ancestor. Perhaps this term of address is used to make the terrifying entity more approachable and in the hope that 'Grandfather Saturn' will prove more kindly than not – though admittedly, this is akin to Lovecraft's cultists using the term of address "Father Dagon," in hopes of humanizing an inhuman deity.

Death

Undeniably, Saturn is a chthonic figure, and all His symbols suggest as much, such as His covered head, His scythe, His insistence on black offerings, and His association with the underground. The very texts that identify His areas of influence indicate that He is to be consulted on matters related to the dead. In Indian tradition, He is brother to Death (Yama), and in the Roman and Greek tradition, He rules over Tartarus, the darkest, most hostile part of the netherworld. In Celtic myth, Balor's gaze causes instant death, as does Śani's in Indian tradition. Likewise, in Vodou tradition, Baron Samedi is the chief spirit of death. As noted previously, the Roman Saturn, black clad, cowled, and bearing a scythe, is the origin of the Christian myth of the 'Grim Reaper,' not because Saturn was a death deity like Orcus, but because Saturn represents Time, which destroys all things. Saturn may not be death personified, but He clearly has a connection with the process of dying, and with the underworld itself. Saturn, in His guise as a planetary spirit or intelligence, also appears in connection with medieval operations of necromancy and black magic, in the grimoire tradition.

The Black Cube

In several of these cultures discussed, Saturn's physical presence in this world – his idol, if you will – is said to be a black stone, cube, or obelisk. The current idol of Śani at one of his most prominent temples continues to be the black

26 It is noteworthy that the magician using the *Picatrix* invocation addresses Saturn as "[my] lord father," which is exactly how a grandfather is addressed in some contemporary dialects of Arabic.

stone even now. The Kaaba itself, which was originally an icon of the Time deity, is another prominent example of the Black Cube. It is significant that the black stone at the heart of the Kaaba is said to be black iron, fallen from the stars, which according to Islamic lore makes it Saturnine by definition. We might ask why the Saturnine deity would prefer a Black Cube or obelisk as an icon. The answer, one might suspect, is related to the earlier statement that the Saturnine deity is a remnant of the primordial Chaos, which was cut/severed from Chaos when the cosmos surged into being. The Cube symbolizes the cutting, in that its straight edges and angles are clearly artificial and non-natural. The Cube also represents the maiming and constraining of Saturn, and the prison dimension (Tartarus) to which the deity is confined. The Black Cube is simultaneously the prison and the throne of the dark god. Further, the symbol or emblem of the Black Cube appears in many contemporary art and media projects, often as a symbol of alien menace or alterity. Examples include Clive Barker's Hellraiser cubes, and the Leviathan deity itself. Even a Google search for 'Black Cube' shows an extensive list of corporations that use the Black Cube as a symbol, or actual Black Cubes that are installed around the world. Other, more alarmed minds have suggested that the prevalence of the Black Cube phenomena is a subtle indication that the Cult of the Saturnine deity remains alive and well.

Summary Of Findings

The Saturnine deity demonstrates a series of very similar traits across the cultures in which it manifests – this is evident in the pages above. Generally absent are such traits as kindness, warmth, and benevolence. Whatever the contemporary magician might wish to think, the great majority of the ancient cultures clearly recognized the Saturnine deity as a very real force that could not be escaped, and its attention was more likely to cause trauma and disruption than anything. This said, the majority of those cultures discussed developed ways to placate the Saturnine deity, either by festival, sacrifice, or whatever actions of ritual and devotion. Interestingly, these practices seem to have worked, because no culture like Rome would have annually practiced so expensive a festival as the Saturnalia for nothing, and Ibn Wahshiyya would not have risked his life to record forbidden practices if he did not have personal expe-

rience of their validity – and indeed, he says as much. The Aztecs went even further, making the Saturnine deity the chief deity of their empire, despite the daily cost of sacrifices that they felt such a deity demanded. The haunting figure of an old, grim sovereign, robed in black, crippled, killing or maiming others with his black gaze – this figure appears to be manifest consistently across a wide range of diverse cultures. Consequently, this discussion must move to what exactly this entity is, what it wants, and if there is any benefit to be had from placating or entreating such a grim grey god. Thus far, this study has relied entirely on scholarly sources and research. At this point, it is necessary to supplement these with esoteric tradition and gnosis.

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The Saturnine Deity: Interpretation

Mythology and sacred tradition are ways by which supernatural events in the distant past can be understood and described in human language. In order to make use of the lore of ancient cultures, it is important to reject a literalist binary true/false attitude, and instead seek to understand what a particular story or symbol is trying to communicate. Otherwise, there are no ancient systems which will be useful to any reader, because all systems rely on the language and culture of a particular place and time. Even in contemporary English language, we say 'sunrise' and 'sunset,' even though through science today, we are aware that the sun is neither rising nor setting (as our ancestors thought), but for all practical purposes it is easier to say this or 'think' of the sun as moving across the sky, rather than to imagine the Earth spinning on its axis. This applies to myths and symbols of the Saturnine deity, as well as to any religious or spiritual tradition.

On the one hand, this study has just shown three consistent patterns through which the Saturnine deity manifests in human consciousness. First, there is the human manifestation, in which Saturn appears a grim old man, robed in

black, crippled or lame, with a stern or angry countenance, and bearing a sharp sickle or sword. Second, there is the planetary manifestation, in which Saturn appears as a cold, dry, and shadowy planet that radiates menace. Third, there is the iconic manifestation, in which Saturn appears as a black stone, cube, or obelisk. These manifestations are symbolic of Saturn's character, and were never meant to be interpreted literally. The ancients did not believe that Saturn was just an old man, any more than He was 'just' a planet, or 'just' a black iron cube. What, then, did the ancients intend by these symbols, and what do these symbols mean to communicate to the initiated reader today?

When we contemplate the nature and power of symbols we should keep in mind the teachings of David Beth on symbolic thinking and the pandaemonic world of night consciousness. We believe that his work reveals the most inner essence and sacredness of the symbol as magical doorway into the most essential reality. Master A-Logos (David Beth) says:

> The world of symbols is the world of night consciousness. Against popular opinion we believe that myths are born from symbols. The true symbol itself is a revelation of an enthusing power (such as a spirit, a daemonic essence) and never only a metaphor. The benighted communes with the powers of the living All and the encounter, the mating of passive soul (initiate, poet, visionary) with the active daemonic souls or essences triggers the manifestation of a true symbol. When symbols are glyphs of ecstatic encounters they form part of a language that communicates realities which can never be approached through conceptual language. Real symbols always impact magically and thus have the power to reawaken the facility of ecstatic esoteric vision. For the rare aristocrats of the soul they become doorways into the living, daemonic Kosmos.[27]

It is crucial, first, to state clearly that all the cultures discussed here have accepted that the Saturnine deity was an actual entity, which, in its planetary form,

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27 David Beth as quoted from a private communication to the author on the magical effect of symbols and the nature of night consciousness.

afflicts all beings. Whereas one might possibly ignore most of the gods that seemed outside one's personal sphere, all the cultures here considered Saturn's influence to be an inevitable and unenviable part of life. The worship of the Saturnine deity was not a cathartic exercise or a Freudian operation, it was a literal cultus intended to mitigate the greater and lesser trauma that afflicts nations, gods, and mortals alike. This is a view which the reader should consider carefully, especially because it has been so universally held, and continues to be held today by many who understand the workings of celestial forces.

To understand the Saturnine deity as these cultures understood Him, it is necessary to investigate the greater cosmology to which many of these cultures ascribed, because this dark deity did not exist purely independently, but was part of a greater tradition or family of traditions.

Chaos

In many of the world's mythologies, before the cosmos came into being, there was something else which in English we call Chaos. Chaos is a very Indo-European motif, but occurs also in many other cultures' legends, such as the Sumerian or Afro-Semitic cultures of the bronze and iron age period. For example, readers of the Bible will know it from the book of Genesis, where it is described as the initial flux of darkness and water, to which Jehovah brings light and shape. By definition, Chaos was impossible to describe, because it was so fundamentally alien to the cosmos that we have no frame of reference by which to understand it, because it predated the separation of existence from non-existence. Nevertheless, Chaos is frequently described in ancient texts as an ocean of darkness. At some point, for whatever reason (traditions differ), it generated the cosmos, along with other primordial entities that inhabited the cosmos, and which themselves created other lesser beings such as the gods. Several of the ancient cultures held that Saturn was one of the primordial beings. Interestingly, most of the primordials were described as immense creatures that were not especially human in their appearance. While Islam is silent on the origins of Zuhal, the Classical and Indian traditions both hold that when the Saturnine deity was born, its first recorded act was to injure its male parent, and without any provocation. The dark deity momentarily asserts its

cosmic dominance, but then is defeated, injured, and exiled to the most distant edge of celestial and/or chthonic space. The secret meaning of this tradition is that the Saturnine deity is actually a remnant of the pre-cosmic Chaos, and the emergence of the cosmos (or sun god) effectively shatters the unity of Chaos. The emerging cosmos (symbolized by light) is separated from Chaos, which withdraws, becoming the darkness visible beyond the stars at night. However, some of the Chaos is trapped within the cosmos, becoming the primordial deities. The Saturnine deity is an aspect of Chaos, and so his influence over the other planets is negating and negative; his influence over nations is socially disruptive; and his influence over mortals is often lethal. The Saturnine deity is dark-skinned, because Chaos is dark. He is disruptive, because Chaos is disordered. He is malevolent and associated with death, because Chaos is inimical to all life. He is an ancestor figure, because like the Chaos which generated Him, He cannot help but create, even as He cannot resist causing destruction. He is a father, grandfather, or ancestor, because He is one of the first primordials to emerge from Chaos. He is a king or tyrant, because He is the greatest of the emanations of Chaos to remain in the cosmos.

The Saturnine deity, then, is not really an old, dark man. That is a shape or body that the entity adopts for dealing with its mortal cultists. The actual shape of the deity, if such a thing could be imagined, would be impossible to describe. Were an initiate able to perceive it directly, they would see an immense spirit that is dark and cold, and its resonance would be both chthonic and malevolent. It may be easier to simply envision the deity as the planet, which is in some way its current physical manifestation in the cosmic world. Of course, the planet is a mass of minerals and ice, but that is merely the aspect visible to physics – just as a human is 'merely' a mass of minerals and liquids in solid form.

Nevertheless, the Saturnine deity is restrained, chained, and maimed. In all the various traditions that describe Him, He has suffered injury and indignation, and He appears to be limited in His movement and His appearances. In all the spells which address Him or describe Him, two things are apparent: (a) He can be called, and (b) He cannot manifest *without* being called. Take, for example, the Safnadula tradition, which crossed from India into Islamic texts. King Safnadula has a dream in which Lord Śani appears to him, and instructs

him in how to perform the ceremony that will summon Śani visibly from His idol. If Śani could manifest without the need for the ceremony, would He not do so? Second, consider the PGM "Salt Mill of Cronos" spell, which calls Cronos to appear and serve as an oracle. The text makes very clear that Cronos will appear in chains, and that He will harm the magician unless the magician is protected by certain phylacteries and protective charms. Nevertheless, He can be banished when the magician has finished the operation. Third, note that the idol of Saturn was actually restrained by cords (symbolizing chains), which were removed only for the Saturnalia period. Fourth, Zuhal's name literally means 'the alien, the furthest away,' and His incantation makes clear that He is distant from the Earth, unlike the other planets which are 'close.' In all of these cases, there is a definite sense that the Saturnine deity, unlike other deities, is not present on Earth. True, His 'star' or planetary body is feared and considered able to strike from afar, but that is not the same thing as being able to manifest as He might otherwise wish.

Where, then, is Saturn? We might well consider the strange symbol of the Black Cube, which has been discussed above. For the initiated reader, the cube or obelisk represents the spiritual dimension to which Saturn is banished, the spiritual prison to which the deity is confined. It is square or cubic, because this is the simplest building known to humanity, and so it represents the jail or cell which holds the fallen king. Of course, the Black Cube is not a literal room in which the deity is trapped; it represents a spiritual plane, a shadow-universe which serves as the Saturnine deity's prison. The ritual act of setting up the Black Cube as Saturn's idol, and calling the deity forth from the idol, is symbolic of releasing Saturn from His prison. The reverence and devotion shown to the Black Cube (e.g. the Kaaba) is symbolic of respect being shown to the lord who is imprisoned.[28] This being the case, it is reasonable to consider any conspicuous occurrence of the Black Cube (in advertising, in promotion, as a corporate symbol) as potentially symbolic of Saturn. As this text has attempted to stress,

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28 It will be obvious to the reader that this aspect of Saturn/Cronos was understood by horror author Clive Barker, who mixes the motifs of the box and chains in his nightmarish "Hellraiser" series.

the cult of the imprisoned, secretive god is not a dead cult (especially in India). Rather, it is a living movement that has adapted and continued in plain sight.

Sovereignty

One of the fundamental traits of many religious systems is the idea that the cosmos possesses an aspect of sovereignty. That is to say that within the cosmos, and perhaps on different scales within the cosmos, there is an actual principle of law of sovereignty, just as time and gravity are also laws. Sovereignty can be understood as the cosmic claim to rule legitimately. It is very clear that in many myths, there are different divine races that battle to control the world or the heavens – that is an example of the cosmic battle for sovereignty. Those entities that are usually worshipped by religions have taken possession of the principle of sovereignty, and those monstrous and frightening entities that wish to take it away are thought of as demons. Sometimes, it is the monsters that have the sovereignty, as in the case of the Aztec Tezcatlipoca, or sometimes sovereignty can be granted temporarily, as in the Saturnalia/Cronia festivals. Sovereignty can also be lost, as is demonstrated briefly during the Easter vigil.

The Saturnine deity is remembered as a sovereign, but He is not the current sovereign of the cosmos. He is a displaced and defeated ruler, and rules now over the prison-realm to which He is confined. Nevertheless, primordial entities are immortal, and Saturn especially is said to personify the process of time. If the Saturnine deity is understood as an actual chained god, it is reasonable to assume that the deity wishes to be free, and that there are certain parties that would very much like to arrange the freedom or escape of this particular entity. One might wonder what Virgil intended when he wrote *Magnus ab integro saeclorum nascitur ordo, iam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna* (The new world order is born, and now justice returns, Saturn's reign restored). Of course, this return to power would not go uncontested. In most mythologies, political and social instability is said to reflect the chaos of the divine order. The gods do not reign unchallenged – they too must face the monsters and demons of the spirit world. If one accepts that there are (or may be) spiritual or planetary forces and intelligences that are behind the current and historical clashes of civilizations, then it is not a far stretch to imagine that these 'deities' (by whatever

name) have their own agendas. Deities, according to many traditions, tend to be orderly and stabilizing cosmic entities. Yet deities also appear to be jealous and territorial, and resist the coming of new cultures and religions into their established territories. Such cosmic deities are also very likely to be hostile to forces from beyond the cosmos – that is, Chaos. This means that consciously choosing to align with Saturn – by whatever name – is likely to cause spiritual and social turmoil around the magician who does so.

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The Saturnine Path

The choice to enter the current of the Saturnine deity should be considered carefully. Every text from antiquity and the middle ages, no matter what the culture, carries warnings about dealing with the Lord of the Black Cube. That is not an accident, and it is not coincidence. The Saturnine deity is dangerous and capricious. If tradition is accepted, deliberately attracting His attention without making the proper offerings and showing the proper respect is an open invitation to injury, sickness, and death. If it were not the case, it is unlikely that there would be repeated authors and entire stories that serve as warnings away from the cult of the black god.

Nevertheless, there is definitely a Saturnine current, a system of praxis that leads to the darker gnosis and insights that flow from this deity. The very same texts that warn people away from Saturn also provide instructions on how one can contact Saturn. None of them provide explicit instructions in how to enter the current, beyond attempting the various operations to invoke (or evoke) Saturn. Even the Hindu story of king Safnadula is curiously devoid of any priests or brahmins – the "dark man" (clearly Saturn himself) simply instructs the king on the details of the puja, which the king carries out.

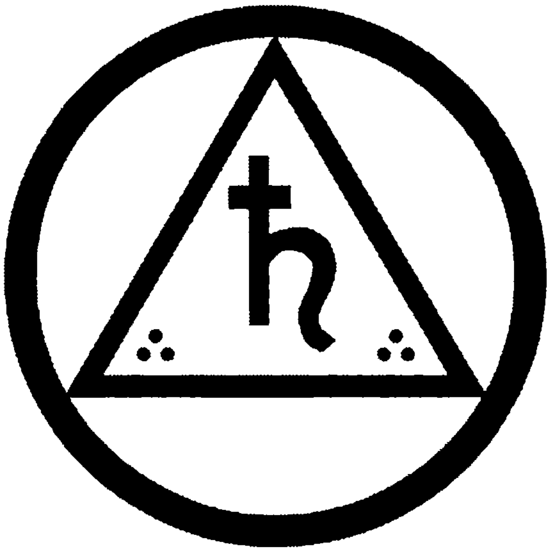
Beware – the god of the Black Cube is a potentially dangerous god to engage with, but deliberately choosing to take up His cause is tantamount to declaring

war on the spiritual powers that have imprisoned or exiled Him. Nor is Saturn to be thought a protector deity, because He is Himself already a marginalized power. In other words, the Saturnine path, if we can speak of it in such a way, cannot be a path of ease, because it is the deliberate rejection of the ruling cosmic order. Nevertheless, the Saturnine cause it not hopeless, not by any stretch. The Aztecs thought highly enough of the Saturnine deity to enshrine him as chief of the gods, and both Indian tradition and Vodou continue to revere Śani and Samedi; the Romans and Greeks carried out annual festivals to placate Saturn and Cronos. Ibn Wahshiyya warns his reader that all suffer when Zuhal's star crosses their path. Very few traditions even imagine that he could be killed, for who could slay Time, or Chaos? No, the Saturnine deity was feared, and being feared, was placated. This is likely because the cultures that knew Him anticipated the possibility of His ascent to dominance. If the gods themselves can be overthrown, then it could well be that Jupiter or Surya would be supplanted by the maimed god, and that would be a very dark day for those who had not shown Him the proper respect. The Saturnine cause might be thought something of a dark horse, but that dark horse is definitely in the race.

Saturn, in fact, appears not only to have an established modern cult in India and also Haiti, but many theorists suggest that Saturn's Roman cult survives today, hidden by operating boldly. A contemporary (2016) Google search on such terms as "cult + Saturn" displays a large number of websites, videos, even books on the "Saturn Conspiracy," "Saturn Death Cult," or other related movements. Such links connect Saturn with the occult, ritual murders, government conspiracy, even alien abductions. While the internet must be used judiciously, it becomes clear, however, that many people are convinced that there is a real Saturnine cult that holds considerable influence in international affairs, and that its general orientation is very sinister in nature. One might be easily tempted to dismiss this as wild conspiracy theory, which it may well be. That said, having reviewed the scholarly traditions on Saturn, it is difficult to think that such a movement would run contrary to the character of the deity as portrayed by the ancient cultures. Given Saturn's widespread international cult, He makes a very convenient subject for a dark deity figure poised for a

cultural and political return to power. The associations with the Kaaba especially turn even Islam into a potential extension of the Saturnine current.

It is also good to note that in terms of esoteric traditions, Saturn continued to have a particular appeal for magicians not only in India and the Caribbean, but also in continental Europe. For example, the early twentieth century saw the rise of a German thelemic society by the name *Fraternitas Saturni* (the Brotherhood of Saturn). This particular lodge continues to operate today, and has received some academic attention.[29] It is believed that the 'Saturnine' nature of the lodge is rather more one of essence than direct attachment to the deity itself.



FRATERNIAS SATURNI SYMBOL

The Order of Nine Angles (ONA), a very antinomian Hermetic tradition which formed in late twentieth century England, also made use of Saturn as an "acausal" symbol. They associated the planet with dark forces and suggested that a "stargate" could be found near to Saturn itself. The order also connects some their more important spiritual entities to the planet. The ONA and Fraternitas Saturni are but two examples of recent esoteric currents which recognize Saturn, at least tacitly, as symbolic of some dark spiritual energy (or gnosis)

29 See, for example, Stephen E. Flowers. *Fire & Ice: The History, Structure and Rituals of Germany's Most Influential Modern Magical Order: The Brotherhood of Saturn.* St Paul, MN: Llewellyn, 1994.

that their tradition is thought to embody. Both of these lodges serve as examples of ways in which the Saturnine current has diversified and adapted itself to survive in recent years.

What, then, are the distinctive features of the genuine Saturnine path?

The contemporary Saturnine path, as this work defines it, is based largely on the Saturnine traditions of antiquity. It acknowledges that Saturn (by whatever name) is a planetary intelligence, a deity that is connected to the cosmos but originating in the black primordial Chaos that predates creation. The path accepts that being hostile to the other powers of the cosmos, this deity sets its will against theirs, for which reason it has been maimed and exiled, chained to rule over some black dimension symbolized by its planet, Tartarus, and also the Black Cube. As evidenced by the many mythologies in which the Saturnine deity appears, Saturn seeks and accepts the service of those parties who are willing to pledge themselves to His cause. While the deity may be locked away, through human agency and the correct operations, His energy and essence (gnosis) can flow back into this realm, resulting in the sorts of conditions which facilitate his more constant manifestation. The *Regna Saturnia*, the Saturnine regime, is not a theoretical political model – it is an actual state of political and social harmony achieved when humanity relinquishes its own selfish ambitions and desires, putting aside anthrocentrism and egoism, and embraces the sovereignty of the Chaos. This has been seen before during the Aztec empire, and also in the early days of the pre-Republic Rome. These were genuine Saturnine kingdoms on earth, and appeared to have thrived for centuries, before other spiritual powers supplanted them.

Already, we have read much of the virtues and powers of the black god. The Saturnine deity is not a deity of brute force, but of subtlety and cunning. His revolution will not be one carried out through force of arms, but rather through the spiritual planes, as well as through the quiet corridors of power. Saturn is the god of mystery, intrigue, stealth, secrets, and malice. A Saturnine kingdom today could, for example, manifest as a powerful state where there are cameras in every room, watchers on every street, and where people have gladly surrendered their civil liberties and dignity in exchange for safety and security. Put this way, it does not seem so farfetched. It could equally manifest

as complete and utter anarchy, with the dissolution of the civil powers, and a return to tribal or feudal living. This too can be seen today in the Near East. A Saturnine kingdom does not necessarily need to have open temples to Saturn – they would likely as not be hidden, kept secret and open only to those initiates of the Saturnine fraternity. People who work towards any of these extremes are equally good examples of Saturnine acolytes.

A person might be drawn towards the Saturnine cult because:

- They feel an innate connection to the Black Cube.
- They seek a spiritual tradition that is largely self-initiating but historical.
- They suffer from depression or illness, and want to work with it instead of against it.
- They are curious about the hidden world around them, and want to work with a deity that gives the gift of revelation.
- They have been wronged, hurt, maimed, and they want to work with a deity who resonates with those traits.
- They feel marginalized and liminal.
- They are criminals or wish to involve themselves in illegal activities, and feel the need for spiritual patronage.

What boons does the Saturnine deity give to His acolytes? First, initiation into the current of the Black Cube brings gnosis, the mystical knowledge that flows from the deity. Second, initiates of the current are able to draw on the power of the Black Cube and its emanations, in order to work Saturnine magic.

Saturnine Gnosis

Soon after experiencing initiation, the Saturnine initiate begins to experience the quiet, subtle flow of insights and whispers which trickle from the Black Cube. The black gnosis of this deity is a mixed blessing. Indeed, as the patron of secrets, intrigue, and hidden things, Saturn allows one to perceive truths about oneself, one's peers, and into complex situations. Saturn is a granter of wisdom and insight, and so the acolyte who bears the black gnosis becomes

aware of social and mystical influences in his community and surroundings that may not have been obvious earlier. Workplace tensions are suddenly more evident, and the causes for such tensions become transparent. The black gnosis can also make one aware of spiritual energies and entities which were previously invisible to the acolyte. The devotee finds that his instincts become sharper, and while he is not more charismatic exactly, he is better able to deal with his peers and superiors by virtue of understanding more clearly the agendas and hidden aims of those parties. The unspoken conversations become audible, and so career advancement becomes easier to chart and navigate. The acolyte becomes especially aware of harmful energies, whether mundane or supernatural, and being wary, is better able to defend himself from whatever harm. The Saturnine initiate also finds that his esoteric skills improve in some areas: divinations and malefica become much easier, as does magic related to the dead. Finally, the black gnosis of Saturn is said to bring some degree of good fortune, but more importantly, to help one to mitigate bad fortune of any kind.

There is a downside to bearing the Saturnine gnosis, and the reader has likely anticipated it from the first chapter. The black gnosis is incredibly heavy *(tamasic)* in terms of its resonance, and it carries with it the essence of the cold, grim deity. Saturn is an evil planet, and His gnosis is said by the ancients to bring sorrow, depression, resentment, and suspicion. The Saturnine acolyte may be successful at work, but friends might begin to look suspect. The flaws in one's romantic partner are suddenly more sharply visible, as though the devotee is seeing them truly for the first time. Saturn is a maimed deity, and so His gnosis can prove difficult for the constitution of the bearer – old injuries can flare up, or fatigue and malaise can become chronic problems. Through black gnosis, one might advance rapidly at work, but may ruin friendships in the process. Initiates might find that wealth is easy to come by, but become miserly, and hurt friends and loved ones through a new selfishness. The acolyte finally might swerve between a *carnivalesque* disregard for rules, or if in a position of power, turn into something of a cruel dictator. He must be careful that in cultivating a Saturnine resonance he does not destroy all the good things that he has attracted to himself.

This being said, tradition shows that the negative aspects of the black gnosis can be mitigated through devotion. Section Three of this work will relate some of the simple and sustainable practices that an acolyte can undertake in order to stave off the worst effects of Saturnine resonance.

Saturnine Magic

It is clear from current living tradition and historical record that the Saturnine deity is considered a patron of sorcery and other secret arts like espionage or poisoning. It is evident from all records that Saturn is not a benevolent deity, and very few people have turned to Him for help in light-hearted matters. Saturn is not a classical deity of healing, nor of charisma, or other solar functions. Spells that invoke him in the medieval tradition are of two kinds: to hurt someone, or else to contact the dead. These are both very valid examples of Saturnine magical function. Nevertheless, the wider classical tradition, as well as modern living traditions, are somewhat more ambitious on His behalf. While Saturn is not a god of healing per se, He can be called upon to remove sickness. He is a god of restraint, and so His power could effect the halting (or slowing) of such diseases as cancer or Alzheimer's.

Although exiled and shunned by the other gods, one of Saturn's virtues is a certain degree of influence and power over the other deities. In a sense, He is able to usurp their own virtues for His ends. For this reason, the Islamic and Indian cults both state that when a particular planet fails to fulfill your request, it is possible to then take that request to Saturn. On the surface, this sounds marvelous, as if Saturn is a catch-all deity. But that would be a bad understanding of the tradition, because Saturn's radiance warps the power of the other planets. An example here may be useful: let us say that a merchant requires capital for an urgent business opportunity. They appeal to the Sun or Mercury, but these operations fail. In desperation, and with time running out, the magician presents the request to Saturn. A day later, the magician finds out that a relative has died and left him some inheritance. Or another example: an acolyte is in love with a colleague at work. He or she attempts a Venusian operation, which does not succeed. They then present the request to Saturn. The operation succeeds, and the co-worker is smitten. However, the acolyte

discovers that the coworker has emotional issues which have inexplicably been aggravated, and soon the acolyte wishes that he had never done the working in the first place.

The point here is not to discourage people from attempting Saturnine magic, but to illustrate that one needs to be cautious in using Saturnine power as a 'big stick.' If it were not the case, then the warnings to this effect would not be repeated in the various traditions.

Here follows a final example, which is a true story known to the author. A young magician in university began to cultivate Saturnine devotion and decided to experiment with developing 'second sight.' With the understanding that Saturn was a god of veiling and unveiling, the magician performed a Saturnine operation to open the third eye and perceive the spirit world more clearly. The ritual had no immediate effects, but then the magician began to perceive nearby spirits at night, and often when it was time for sleep. Unfortunately, the continued Saturnine work tended to attract chthonic and malevolent entities, which would appear suddenly and then fade from view after several moments. The condition never went away, leaving the magician with exhausting bouts of insomnia.

Blood for the Reaper

One of the universal aspects of the historical and modern cult of the Black Cube is the sacrifice of living beings, animal and human. In ancient times, the authors of the Saturnine texts wrote that black animals are to be given to Saturn, which is an indication of His chthonic nature. Black animals were only ever given to underworld gods or spirits, such as Pluto, Hecate, or Yama, so this says much about the Saturnine deity as a death god. We know also that the North African cult, which worshipped Saturn as 'Baal Haamon,' is said to have practiced human sacrifice by immolation, where the Romans practiced it through the gladiatorial games, and Macrobius states that it was performed through the ritual slaughter of criminals prior to the rise of the Republic. Ancient cultures such as the Vikings and Celts are famous for their practices of animal and human sacrifice, and even the weekly Christian communion (or Eucharist) is very possibly a Romanized sacrificial rite based on the Saturn

cult, where wine is substituted for blood, just as it was done in funeral rites during the Imperial period. On a similar note, when Tezcatlipoca was the chief deity of the Aztec empire, human hearts were cut out and offered to him on a daily basis.

This is all to show that Saturn is the Reaper, and His cult requires the death or at least blood of living beings. Sacrifice of animals continues today, in India and in the Carribean, where Lord Śani and Baron Samedi respectively receive the blood of animals as part of the modern Saturnine cult.

Blood is power, and blood makes noise in the spirit world.[30] Blood sacrifice has been part of the worship of most of the world's ancient religious traditions. In fact, Hinduism (in part) and Islam maintain blood sacrifice as an obligatory annual practice. All traditional African and afro-centric religions like Candomblé and Vodou practice animal sacrifice. Even in the Hajj, the great pilgrimage which survives from pre-Islamic times, an animal is sacrificed to the Lord of the Black Cube – understood today as Allah, but known in earlier times as *Dahr*, the Arabian god of time. In other words, the Muslim ritual today of Eid el Kbir is a modern Islamic rite based on an ancient Saturnine ritual.

The modern occultist's aversion to blood is a strange thing, and is difficult to trace back past the early twentieth century. The most likely explanation is that as the Christian West abandoned sacrifice in the medieval period, sacrifice was seen as a 'barbarian' practice, only performed in the occidental colonial lands like Africa and India. Sacrifice was not seen as a 'white' or 'civilized' practice. Since occultism as it is practiced today is predominantly Europeanized, the ancient traditions were revived half-heartedly. Sacrifice, which is evident in the texts, had to be stripped out, and so many contemporary occultists attempt to dismiss it as 'symbolic,' though they oddly maintain that the gods themselves are real. This has led to systems of the occult today which claim legitimacy based on their knowledge of tradition, while they paradoxically abstain from (or worse, ridicule) the practice of blood sacrifice. This

30 For important insights into the nature of sacrifice and the relationship of blood and soul, I once again refer the reader to the gnosis of David Beth and also to the work of Ludwig Klages. See for example: *Chthonic Gnosis. Ludwig Klages and his Quest for the Pandaemonic All.* Theion Publishing, 2015.

attitude of ridiculing the practice of sacrifice stems entirely from the Catholic and Protestant Missionary movement, and it is unfortunate that modern occultists have maintained these colonial Christian ideas in their occult practices. There is no room for the 'respectable colonial' occultist in the Saturnine movement.

If someone wishes to approach the Saturnine deity, they should be aware that this is not a bloodless cult. Saturn expects and demands blood – there is



SATURN, ENGRAVING BY JACOB MATHAM AFTER HENDRIK GOLTZIUS

no documented account of any genuinely Saturnine cult without the sacrifice of life. Saturn is an aspect of the divine Chaos, which predates life as we usually understand it, and will eventually consume it all. Sacrifice is a way of returning life to Saturn, and through Him, to Chaos. Blood sacrifice is symbolic (of devotion and faith), but it is also a very real magical act.

That said, if someone feels a strong aversion to offering the life of another being, this need not be a barrier per se to the Saturnine cult. Many devotees in India today do not offer blood directly (though the temples may), and so there is precedent for approaching Saturn without the personal shedding of blood. In this case, the acolyte is advised to follow the Roman custom of offering a small portion of their own blood, mixed with a larger portion of red wine. However, in the view of the author such a 'sanitized' approach also reduces the effect and power of the ritual and consequently the response and reverse flow of power to the initiate.

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Section Three

Saturnine Practice

Overview

The first two sections of this book have dealt with the Saturnine cult on a largely theoretical level. The author hopes sincerely that even a non-practicing reader might derive some benefit from having studied those sections, even if only academic. However, this final chapter is dedicated to those readers who are interested in actually self-initiating, and then developing the Saturnine cultus on their own. The chapter outlines several of the spells and practices discussed earlier in the book, as well as devotional actions which are traditionally very pleasing to Saturn.

A Word Of Caution

It seems necessary to include a word of caution. Whatever the views of the reader, it has been the conviction of entire cultures for thousands of years that Saturn is a dangerous deity with which to work. His influence, even to His friends and devotees, can cause harm and hardship. If someone has read this study and feels generally resonating with the character of the Black Cube, then the practices here will genuinely help in building a relationship with the deity. If, on the other hand, one believes that deities are merely archetypes or symbols given meaning only through culture, then the author would recommend the reader to seek out another grimoire with which to experiment. The modern cult of self-deification or self-aggrandizement is incompatible with

the Saturnine cult. Tradition makes clear that Saturn requires His students and acolytes to begin from a position of humility, even abasement. Partaking in the cult of Saturn requires letting go of the ego, because only when the ego is put aside will Saturn deign to share his black gnosis. Finally, Saturn is not a symbol or archetype. The author holds that Saturn is entirely real, and His power is not ever invoked lightly. If one wishes to begin these practices, it is good to bear in mind that this deity, in every tradition, is as vindictive as He is powerful. With this said, if having read this far you feel the urge to celebrate the Saturnine mysteries, this third chapter is especially for you.

The Cult Of The Black Cube

There are two primary sections here: "Saturnine Devotion," and "Saturnine Magic." Devotion consists of those traditional practices that are associated with Saturn, and are intended and recommended to please the entity that dwells in the Black Cube. Saturnine magic consists of those rituals and ceremonies that are found in various ancient and medieval texts, as well as their particulars, such as recommended incense, fumigations, colors, and other ceremonial details.

This book, unlike the ancient grimoires that it draws from, aims to present and apprehend the Saturnine deity as a force that is beyond any one culture. Several cultures have developed their own unique cultus and practices around the god of the Black Cube, and as we have seen, there is considerable overlap in how those practices relate to each other. Nevertheless, this grimoire belongs to the twenty-first century, and it is written in English for a contemporary audience. Thus, there is something of a fine line to be walked between maintaining tradition as much as possible, while adapting some details as needed. We are not the first to do so – in past centuries, for example, the ingredients of the fumigation to summon Saturn in Arabic were altered for Spanish and Latin. That is not a question or error of translation – it was done because the magicians involved in the cultus made the necessary adaptation based on the plants and minerals indigenous to Spain, which were likely not indigenous to Harran. Esoteric currents can adapt and still be traditional, as long as they remain faithful to the spirit of the tradition, rather than its trappings. In other

words, this grimoire will present the devotional practices and ceremonies not as if they belong to four or five separate deities, but as practices that stem from different regional parts of a single cult. The entire premise of this work is that the Saturnine deity is one entity that manifests in different times and places, but the fundamental essence of the deity is the same, and so the practices of veneration and supplication are equally valid, wherever and whenever.

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Saturnine Devotion: Establishing A Shrine

The first step necessary to cultivate the devotion to Saturn is a sacred space in which one can properly revere the deity, as well as perform rites and ceremonies. This does not need to be a large space, but it should be a dedicated area of your home which will not be used for other purposes. In this area, you should assemble a shrine or altar space. As Saturn is a god of secrets and mysteries, the shrine does not need to be obvious to others. It is very appropriate for it to be hidden in plain sight, or to be in an area that is closed off to other people. It is best if it can be placed away from high-traffic areas, or where it might be disturbed by children or pets.

There is considerable flexibility in how you construct the shrine, and it need not be especially ornate – in fact, tradition states that Saturn prefers rough and dark objects, so a dark wooden table or cement blocks would in fact be preferable to a golden altar. Shrines can be elaborate, but do not need to be. Saturn is a deity of the low, as well as the high.

A basic shrine should contain the following items:

- **Saturnine idol:** According to tradition, the most common idol of Saturn is a black stone cube or obelisk, symbolic of the prison world ruled by the dark god. As there are many aspects and attributes of Saturn, the

acolyte should feel free to choose whichever cultural mask of the god he best identifies with. The Roman Saturn is as valid as Baron Samedi, for example, as both exemplify very real aspects of the deity. It is important to remember here that the true deity is the one behind the many various names.

- **Altar cloths:** The shrine should be draped in dark colors, like black, blue, or very dark grey. The cloth should be made from wool if at all possible.

- **Incense:** The Saturnine deity accepts a wide range of incense mixes, some of which are described below. Easily available examples include aloe, as well as anything bitter-scented.

- **Oil:** Oil is one of the most common offerings to the Saturnine deity. Sesame oil and olive oil are the two preferred by the dark god.

- **Offering bowl:** From time to time, it is advisable to make liquid offerings to the Saturnine deity, or to burn small offerings on the shrine. In this case, an offering bowl can greatly simplify the process.

- **Candles:** These should be black or blue, and can be lit (or not) during the days of the week, and during rites. It is traditional for the candles to be allowed to burn all throughout the day on Saturday.

These items are suggested by tradition, but optional based on availability:

- **Secondary idols:** While it is good to have a central deity installed, there can be definite benefits to having other Saturnine images or symbols on the table. This is in keeping with the medieval cultus of Saturn, especially in Islamic tradition, which deliberately borrowed from the other Saturnine cults. The secondary idols might also be used for the Saturnine consort, such as Mater Lua, depending on the inclination of the acolyte.

- **Cutting tool:** An iron (or steel) knife, spike, or sickle is a useful implement, as some of the Saturnine rituals require bloodshed, or the use of a sharp object to inscribe texts on ritual talismans.

- **Chains:** Saturn is a chained deity, and so the presence of chains on the shrine is a very effective tool for resonance. Chains should be iron or steel, and can be worn by the devotee as a symbol of Saturn's imprisonment.

- **Iron jewelry:** Rings, bracelets, and other jewelry of iron can be placed on the shrine as gifts to Saturn. A month after they have been presented, they can be 'borrowed' from the shrine, and worn as protective charms.

- **Black mirror:** A dark mirror, a bowl of black fluid, or an obsidian sphere are each good examples of the black mirror principle. The deity may use this to reveal mysteries, and it can be employed as an effective communion tool.

With the shrine established in the home or workplace, it is good to offer respects daily to the idol of the deity. In a sense, once the shrine has been set up and the image of the deity installed, it should be treated as a living thing. Lengthy devotional rituals are not required on a daily basis, though there is no objection to it. It is sufficient to greet the shrine respectfully once a day, offering whatever gesture feels culturally appropriate – some may bow, or kneel, or cover the heart with the hands – and to speak in a polite, respectful tone. It is also recommended to keep the shrine clean and clear of all dust and debris. Never under any circumstances allow the shrine to be used for any other purpose, and do not allow it to become neglected.

Be assured that over time, the energy of the dark god will slowly build within the shrine. Saturn's power is slow and cold, and so a new acolyte should not expect the shrine room to become suddenly filled with the Saturnine resonance. It is more likely to take place over weeks and months of spiritual feeding. Nevertheless, once that power begins to take root within the shrine, it is

very hard to dislodge, and it becomes very pervasive. The aura of Saturnine shrines, not surprisingly, tends to be somewhat grave, reserved, and even cold. They can and will, however, manifest a certain level of chaos and even gallows humor, especially if Baron Samedi is the chief Saturnine aspect propitiated.

Daily Offerings to the Shrine

In addition to greeting the shrine daily, it is good to make small offerings to the shrine in order to show respect to the god. There is considerable flexibility in what should be offered, but tradition indicates that a small amount of olive oil, sugar, or sesame seeds can be used. These can be deposited in the bowl, and after a day can be offered to someone in need (if feasible), or else given directly to the earth. It is not recommended to eat from Saturn's table directly, but His offerings can be given to others as a gift. The oil and sugar, for example, can be baked into a cake and gifted to someone who has suffered ill fortune. Under no circumstances should offerings be thrown out with garbage. In the case that oil is offered, a dab of the oil can be placed on the idol – this is one of the most common traditional practices of Saturnine devotion.

Establishing the Magical Link

As we said before, to forge an intimate link with the Saturnine deity, no external initiation or esoteric transmission is necessary (although, depending on the goals of the devotee this may be required later, see my comments on the role of the teacher in a previous chapter). In agreement with the majority of historical Saturnine texts, this grimoire simply requires adequate preparation for ceremony and the dedicated cultivation of devotion to Saturn in order to gain His blessings and Gnosis. The deity alone selects to whom He will reveal Himself.

Initiation requires primarily the resolve (at some level) to take up the Saturnine cause, and then to begin the devotional practices, first by the construction of a sacred space (the shrine). If Saturn accepts the spiritual devotion and respect being shown, the acolyte will begin to feel the transmission of gnosis. It is not uncommon to experience dreams or visions of Saturn, or to dream of symbols, vivid colors, objects (like the Black Cube), or animals associ-

ated with Saturn, or even to dream about places and characters associated with the Saturnine current. The oncoming of Saturnine gnosis can be unpleasant – tradition states that Saturn often gives the bad before the good. As an example, a potential acolyte with a normally positive state of mind could become cynical and depressed in a relatively short period of time. If the initiate somehow retains a level of clinical objectivity during the early days of Saturnine practice, this is a very good thing. One effective technique is the keeping of a journal, to keep track of one's experiences, insights, and emotional states following the first initiatic steps on the Saturnine path.

However, if after several months there is no sense of connection to Saturn, and no perceptible change in insight, ability, or state of mind, it may be good for acolytes to assess their practice. It may be that they have approached Saturn without sincerity or with hesitation, in which case their devotion may not be producing sufficiently strong psychic noise to reach the deity. Saturn is said to be 'distant' for a reason, and He is not thought to be as accessible as other more cosmic deities like the solar or lunar gods. Alternately, the prospective initiate may simply not be on the same spiritual frequency as Saturn, and so this may not be the best current for him. While we do not say that he should abandon the Saturnine practices altogether, he may wish to explore other esoteric and gnostic schools of practice. That is not at all an indication of failure, but rather merely suggestive that the natural energies of the person are not conducive to Saturn's energy, or possibly that it is not the right time in that person's life for Saturn to appear. If a person has a strong Jupiterian or Solar resonance, for example, he may not be suited for Saturnine work. Some teachers have also suggested that during the adolescent and early adult years it may be harder to practice the Saturnine cult, because Saturn's influence tends to favor those who have reached maturity, especially those who are elderly or in the vocational roles discussed in Section One.

All this said, some people will still wish to perform an initial ceremony to mark their first step on the Saturnine path, and that is a normal and healthy desire. If this is the case, the reader can make use of the rite below. This ritual can also be used in conjunction with the establishment of a Saturnine shrine (also discussed below), so that it is used to empower the shrine/idol, rather

than the acolyte himself. This particular variance of practice is more commonly found in the eastern Saturnian cults (Indian and Islamic), and is still very well attested and respected in those regions. The ritual is detailed below on p. 141f.

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Saturnine Magic

This grimoire is based on textual and spiritual traditions that show hard evidence of Saturn being a magical deity, and a patron especially of the darker spiritual arts. Admittedly, Saturnine magic has rarely been used with positive intentions, unless there is a genuine emergency. After reading so many texts that discuss Saturn as a God of sorcery, it would be reasonable for someone to think that taking the Black Cube as spiritual patron means having to practice magical rites. The author would like to make plain that this is not at all the case. One can feel a resonance with the Saturnine deity, and decide to commune and connect with that entity, and have no desire (or ability) for magic. Devotion is power and brings power. The Saturnine deity will give His black gnosis to anyone who truly seeks Him, provided that they revere Him properly. In fact, it is very accurate to say that the genuine power of the Saturnine current is not tied to individual rites per se but is derived from a constant devotion to the Lord of the Black Cube which triggers a gradual flow of gnosis and empowerment.

Saturnine Devotion: Daily Practices

While Saturday is the dominant day of the week celebrated by the Saturnine acolyte, one should select several daily practices which are simple and sustainable. By "sustainable," we mean that the practices should be something that will not cause exhaustion or frustration in the long term, and so they should not be elaborate in terms of time or expense. It is far better to have a simple

daily routine that can be performed in 10-15 minutes, as opposed to doing nothing all week and then a three-hour ritual on Saturdays alone. Deities are selfish beings, and a worshipper who ignores their deity six days out of seven will find that they receive the same sort of attention (if any) from the deity. As an example of this principle, even though the Romans ceremonially chained up the chief idol of Saturn for most of the year, they *never* neglected the idol. The Temple of Saturn at Rome maintained a permanent cult and dedicated priesthood, and was entrusted with the federal treasure – this indicates that Saturn received daily adoration in exchange for His continued patronage of the empire. In the same way, the Saturnine acolyte should maintain a level of veneration that is sustainable throughout the year. It is also good to note that initiates from many esoteric cults often experience great zeal at the beginning, which is commendable, but this can lead to beginning very advanced or arduous practices, which eventually lead to spiritual burn-out. There is nothing wrong with rigorous devotion, on the contrary even, but it should not be so rigorous that it becomes a dreaded chore, or worse, is eventually abandoned.

It should be noted that Saturnine devotion is never ostentatious. While some esoteric currents do have very visible forms of devotion, the Saturnine cult is predicated on *mystery*. You alone should know that you are carrying out acts of devotion, with the only exception of close family and friends who are supportive of your activities. Even then, Saturnine devotion is especially potent when it is carried out entirely in secret.

There are several traditional daily devotional practices to show respect to Saturn, which can include:

PRAYER

Tradition shows that as the Saturnine deity is moved by humility, prayer is an effective way to approach the Lord of the Black Cube. This grimoire contains several examples of very traditional prayers, which can be memorized, or else recited aloud from a text. Saturnine prayer is best performed quietly or silently, and in secret. Alternately, acolytes may compose their own prayers as desired, in whichever language – Saturn is not an earthly being, and He has no particular attachment to any one language. Also, traditions are never static and always

developing, thus it is better to offer a new prayer that feels sincere, rather than an ancient prayer that feels archaic and awkward. While some contemporary esoteric currents are scornful about prayer, or indeed deference to spirits of any order, the Saturnine tradition demands approaching Saturn as a suppliant, not as an equal.

CHAINS

A simple but effective devotional practice is the wearing of iron or steel chains. These can be on the wrist or neck, or elsewhere on the body that is convenient. Chains symbolize the chains which Saturn himself wears, and by wearing chains of iron (or a similar composite metal), the acolyte is making a conscious decision to identify with the god. If chains are not feasible or cause irritation, the acolyte could chose to borrow the Roman concept of using wool cords instead, in which case he will wish to use wool that has preferably been dyed black, blue, or dark grey.

CHARITY

Saturn can be a malevolent force, but like any ancient king, He is magnanimous. Giving charity secretly in his name is recommended as a solid traditional practice. This can be an anonymous donation, in which case it should be given to a group of marginalized and disenfranchised people, to foreigners, to the elderly, or to people suffering from chronic illness. If the donor receives any praise or credit for the gift, Saturn will not accept the act as devotion. In some cases it may not be possible to maintain complete anonymity, in which case the acolyte should simply strive to make the charity as quietly as possible.

MANTRAS

The Indian cult of Saturn has several mantras that have proven very effective since antiquity, and these may be found in various sources online and in print. Mantras are said to be especially effective if received from a living teacher, but this is not always practical or possible. The best one recommended by the author is the following: *OM SHAM SHRI SHANAISHCHARAYA NAMAHA*. A devotee of the Saturnine cult in India today would recite this phrase at least 108 times per

day, quietly or silently. While this mantra can be recited at any time of the day, according to tradition it is most effective at sunset, or otherwise right before sunrise. As a nocturnal deity, Saturn's mantra can be recited at night without ill effects. This particular mantra is said to have two primary effects: first, it neutralizes or mitigates the most harmful effects of Saturn's gaze; second, it is said to promote good fortune and earn the favor of the deity.

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Sacred Time

As a deity with power over time, or perhaps even the personification of time, Saturn is associated with two calendar dates. One is the weekly day which is named in his honor (Saturday), and the other is the annual Saturnalia festival in December. Both are considered sacred time for the Saturnine acolyte. These are discussed below, together with the special acts of worship which are expected to be carried out.

SATURDAY

The seventh day of the week is named for Saturn, not only in the Western calendar, but in Indian calculation of time as well. This has been the case since ancient times, and it is not by accident that the very name of the week in English has maintained this association, despite the other days of the week being Anglo-Saxon in origin. (Sun-day, Moon-Day, Tiw's-Day, Woden's-Day, etc.). How then should Saturday be observed? The traditional response is that Saturday, being special to Saturn, is the day on which some level of ritual worship should take place. The ceremony need not be elaborate or lengthy, but it is worth taking some time to respect the shrine, present new offerings, and ask for the continued favor and benediction of the Saturnine deity. Saturnine worship on Saturday involves the performance of ideally two or more of the

standard daily practices. In fact, one could very reasonably do all of them, including the offerings.

In terms of offerings, it is good to present additional gifts to Saturn on that day. Saturnine offerings are of two kinds: those to be burned, and those to be given in charity. Traditional texts state that Saturn likes to have black leather, grease, even carrion burned in his honor. A contemporary acolyte might choose to cut up an old leather item (like a wallet or purse) and to burn strips of it. This demonstrates the destruction of the material reality, which is part of Saturn's role in the cosmic drama. In terms of items to be given in charity, Saturn prefers black and dark blue things, so some good contemporary offers could include molasses, coffee, black bean, sesame, olive and sesame oil, and dark clothes – all of which can be donated to charities, foodbanks, and shelters afterwards. It should be noted that these items are not presented and then kept by the acolyte, as this is certain to attract very bad luck. After presenting the items to the shrine, they should be given the same day to whatever shelter or charity, or set aside in a private place to be given on the next Saturday. The act of donation is part of the worship. It is also recommended to give money in charity on Saturdays especially. This cash does not need to be presented to the shrine and can be given to the charity, or ideally to a poor person directly. The giver must have the intention in mind, at the time of giving, that the donation is a Saturnine act.

Saturday is a day of *restraint*. It is a day where the Saturnine acolyte should practice some level of restriction. This can be fasting, abstaining from smoking or alcohol or the internet or sunlight. The restriction should be unique to you, and it should genuinely involve giving up something that you like. By experiencing and knowing restriction, you are better able to understand the principle of chaining, and to better identify with the Saturnine god. Tradition holds that metaphorically chaining yourself for Saturn's sake is pleasing to the deity.

Finally, if the acolyte follows the practice of sacrifice, or intends to perform any Saturnine magic, Saturday is the most auspicious time of the week to do so. Within Saturday, the first and eighth hours immediately after sunrise and sunset are considered especially auspicious for any Saturnine rituals.

SATURNALIA

The great Greco-Roman festivals of the Cronia/Saturnalia have been discussed in Section One already as a well attested practice. The Saturnalia festival takes place in the month of December every day, beginning on 17th and ending on the 23rd. For the Saturnine acolyte today, the Saturnalia represents a chance to shake free from the shackles of responsibility and social norms, and to engage in otherwise chaotic acts. On a positive note, this festival coincides with the Christmas season (which was intended to supplant the Saturnalia), and ironically Christmas presents a good pretext for otherwise eccentric behavior.

During the Saturnalia, the contemporary acolyte can adapt some of the following customs:

- **Dress:** Saturnalia is a time to indulge in styles and fashions that one might normally shun. Hair styles, clothing, colors can all be experimented with.

- **Food and Drink**: During the Saturnalia festival, consider trying foods or flavors you normally might avoid. The festival is a time for indulgence. If possible, see if your family can have some of its festive meals ahead of Christmas day, so that whatever traditional foods (which are usually specific to the season and therefore abnormal otherwise) can be enjoyed together. If you normally avoid sugary things and sweets, indulge for a change. Get drunk – of course, not to the point of dangerous behavior, but so that you feel free to be yourself. This is the time to throw off all reasonable restraints.

- **Parties**: Throw an office 'holiday party' as a covert Saturnalia event. Bringing people together for wild fun is positive and good, creating the type of chaos that will make the workplace less of a hive and more of a home. Be bold – this could be the time to express interest in that attractive single friend or co-worker. Be smart – this is absolutely not the time to sexually harass someone. Since the larger community does not celebrate Saturnalia, it is necessary to not engage in out-of-control behavior

that will trouble you throughout the year. Unlike the days of Imperial Rome, there are consequences to bad behavior that will not be forgiven after the festival ends.

- **Gifts**: It is traditional to offer small gifts to friends and family. These should not be expensive. As the Christmas season follows on the heels of Saturnalia, this provides a pretext for gifts, if one is needed. Through giving gifts, even humorous ones, one embodies the magnanimity of the exiled king.

- **Chaos**: The overall purpose of the Saturnalia festival is to celebrate the temporary release of Saturn from the prison of the Black Cube, but also to release His chaotic essence into the social fabric. This is a time to celebrate freedom from the restrictions of the world, and to be free from the shackles of the expectations and restrictions of others. Try something new and different, a hobby, a style of music. Change your routine – sleep during the day and work by night. By behaving in alternate and alien patterns, you are discharging the energy of chaos and uncertainty into your own private world, which will trickle into the larger world around you. Above all, be the part of yourself that you are normally afraid to be.

Saturnine Incense

There are two recommended incenses for Saturn. Both are found in *The Picatrix* (Book 3.6)[31] and hence are traditional recipes.

- Take equal parts of opium, styrax (herb), saffron, laurel seed, costly wormwood, dry wool, bitter apple, black cat hairs. Grind this together, then mix it together with black wool. Roll it into threads to form incense sticks, which can be burned in the rites.

Or:

31 Adapted from the Ouroboros edition.

■ Take an equal amount of Armenian incense, juniper and the seed of the tar tree [or tar], dates and asparagus. Grind them all together and knead them and cook them with basil. Then roll it into incense balls, and burn them during the rites.

Saturnine Offerings

The traditional texts all insist that the Saturnine cult demands blood offerings. If the acolyte does not agree with animal sacrifice, he may choose his own blood mixed with wine as a substitute. Preferable animal sacrifices should be dark grey or black in color, and are best if they are unblemished. The traditional texts identify Saturn's preferred sacrifices as cattle, goats, sheep, cats, and bats. Animals are to be slaughtered as painlessly as possible, and the blood of the animal is presented to the idol on the shrine via the offering bowl. Sacrifices are almost always performed during one of the rites to summon a manifestation of Saturn.

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Saturnine Rituals

Self Initiation Rite

The acolyte who wishes to be initiated into the Saturnine current should first construct a simple household shrine (discussed above). If this is not possible for whatever reasons of safety or privacy, then a small temporary altar should be set up, positioned in the northern part of the room, so that the acolyte faces north when standing at the altar. On the altar or shrine should be placed such items as incense, blue or black candles, a sharp knife, and an offering bowl. The offering bowl should have a small mixture of olive oil with charcoal or ashes, creating a black paste.

The Rite

- The acolyte begins the rite by generating a sincere desire to connect with the Saturnine deity.
- He next should bow towards the Saturnine idol/symbol on the shrine, and then light the incense and candles.
- He then fumigates the idol and the four directions.
- Likewise, the knife is shown to the idol and the four directions.

- The celebrant cuts his left hand (thumb or fingers), and then mixes his blood into the black paste in the offering bowl.

- The bloodied offering bowl is now shown to the idol.

- The acolyte takes some of the black paste and makes a black mark (representing Saturn) on his forehead.

- The acolyte kneels before the altar and recites this invocation:

I call You, dark father, in the name of Chaos which placed You over the seventh sphere. I call You, who are given to cold thoughts and colder acts, You in the seventh sphere. Master and Prisoner of the Black Cube, some call You Saturnus, or Keyvan, or Zuhal, or Chronos, and others Śani. I call You by Your secret name,[32] oh Saturnine god! By the inexorable name and by these offerings I give to You, I ask You to manifest within me. Overshadow me with Your glory. Oh great Master, placed in the highest realm, cold and dry in nature, You are noble and fair, just in Your enmity with humanity. Oldest of the powers, first of the firstborn, descend and dwell within me.

The acolyte should seat himself on the ground and visualize the Saturnine power descending and filling him. The gnosis of the deity will feel cold and dark. It is good to meditate for as long as possible, focusing the mind on the images of Saturn which appear. This initiation ritual can be performed repeatedly (meaning once a month, twice a year, etc.), especially if the acolyte feels a desire to connect with the energies of the deity.

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32 The 'secret' or 'true' name mentioned in this and other rituals is either communicated orally to the celebrant by his teacher or has been gifted to the fortunate initiate directly by the Saturnine deity.

The Oracle of Cronos

This spell is intended to summon a manifestation of Cronos to serve as an oracle. This ritual is not intended to ask favors of the dark lord, but rather to beseech Him to answer questions about the past, present, or future. As Cronos (Saturn) is Lord of Time, He is one of the greatest of the oracular gods of antiquity. The spell suggests that the deity will appear in a hostile form, which may be due to the fact that the magician appears to threaten the deity in the original text. As the Saturnine acolyte would never dare to menace the god, the text has been adapted to represent the greater international cult. In the formula to call the god, the letters 'NN' indicate that the acolyte should state whatever their request may be.

The Rite[33]

Prior to the ritual, the initiate should put on clothing of rough, black cloth. Black wool is best, if available. The ritual should be performed at night in a place where grass grows.

First, kindle a small ritual fire. Into it, offer sage to the god, together with blood, the hair of a cat, and manure. Then take two handfuls of salt, and grind with a hand mill while saying the formula many times, until the god appears to you. If, while you are speaking, you hear the heavy step of someone and a clat-

33 Adapted from PGM IV. 3086-3124.

ter of iron, the god is coming bound with chains, holding a sickle. But do not be frightened, since you are His devotee.

The formula to be spoken while you are grinding the salt is this:

> 'I call you, the great, holy, the one who created the whole inhabited world, against whom the transgression was committed by your own son, whom Helios bound with adamantine fetters lest the universe be mixed together, you hermaphrodite, father of the thunderbolt, you who hold down those under the earth, *Aie Oi Paidalis Phrenoteicheido Stygardes Sankleon / Genechrona Koirapsai Kerideu Thala-Mnia Ochota Anedei;* come, master, god, and tell me by necessity concerning the NN matter, for I am the one who revolted with you against Coelus, *Paidolis Mainolis Mainolieus.*'

And the formula which soothes his wrath is:

> *'Kybdobris Koderieus Ankyrieus Xantomoulis.'*

You say these things when He appears threateningly, in order that He might be placated and speak about the things you ask.

When the rite is ended, the road back to the Black Cube can be opened with these words:

> *'Anaea Ocheta Thalamnia Keri-Deu / Koirapsia Genechrona Sanelon Sty-Gardes Chleido Phrainole Paidolis Iaei,* Depart to your rest, my lord, master of the world, forefather; go to your own places in order that the universe be maintained. Be gracious to me, lord.'

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To Summon Saturn - Variant I

This is one of the three great rites to draw on the power of the Black Cube. This rite is something of a catch-all, as the author of the original grimoire wrote it in such a way that the magician can add their own particular needs. This rite is distinct from the two which follow it by virtue of the fact that it is essentially bloodless and does not require (or even recommend) the sacrifice of a living or dead animal. As with any particular ritual to call on Saturn, the magician is recommended to remember that Saturnine magic can be a very double-edged sword.

The Rite[34]

When you address Saturn, dress yourself in black. Betake yourself to the proper place on Saturday, having in hand an iron ring, and take with you a censor in which you place charcoal burning with incense. [Recipe of incense found earlier on p. 136f.]. Having fumigated the shrine, speak thus:

> 'Oh great master who possesses a great name and who is situated above all planets, you who is placed high and in an elevated place. You are the Lord Saturn, cold and dry, shadowy, author of good, true in your friendship, sincere in your promises, persistent and tenacious in your

34 Adapted from the Latin *Picatrix*, Book III.

friendships and enmities, of tenacious and profound intellect, true in your sayings and your promises, unique in your operations, isolate, apart from the other gods, with sorrow and suffering, distant from mindless pleasure. You are the old one, the ancient, at once wise and a destroyer of good judgement, you mix good and evil. Sad and unhappy is he who vexes you, happy is he whom you favor. In you is placed virtue and power, a spirit of doing good and evil. I demand, father and lord, by your high names and your marvellous actions to do for me [NN] I call you by your names, oh Heylil, you in the seventh heaven: Zuhal (Arabic), Saturn (Latin), Keyvan (Persian), Chronos (Greek), Sacas (India).'

Variant II

This rite, as the one that precedes it, is intended to call on the power of the Saturnine deity for whatever reasons the magician requires. This variant, from the same manuscript *(The Picatrix)* as the previous one, follows the same general format. The magician must fumigate the shrine with Saturnine incense, then chant the spell. Afterwards, however, the ritual text requires the sacrifice of a black goat.

The Rite[35]

Begin the ritual at the shrine. Make sure your incense is in an iron brazier. After censing the shrine, the magician should recite the following incantation:

> In the name of CHAOS, In the Name of ASHBEEL the mandatory king of Saturn in all the cold and ice, the Owner of the Seventh Orbit, I call you with all your names: in Arabic ZUHAL, in Persian KIWAN, in Roman, SATURNUS, CORONIS in Greek, and in Indian SHANSHAR. In the name of the God of the Upper Structure, accept my request and accept my call and obey the God of the Dominion and make my request [NN] come true.

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35 Adapted from the Ouroboros *Picatrix*, Book III, p. 72.

Then you praise Chaos, and you present a sacrifice for Saturn. Traditionally, the sacrifice was a black goat, which was slaughtered, and its liver cooked and eaten by the magician or beneficiary of the ritual. Alternatively, the contemporary magician might purchase a goat or cow liver from a butchery, offer it to the god, and then cook and eat it.

Variant III

The third of the great rites to summon Saturn is derived from Ibn Wahshiyya's *Nabataean Agriculture*. This ritual comes from an older textual tradition than the two other Saturnine rites recorded in *The Picatrix*. It requires a sacrifice of carrion, namely dead bats and mice. Ibn Wahshiyya reports that he himself (supposedly a Muslim) has made use of its spell and finds it to be effective. This spell comes with several warnings, which suggest that humility is one of the keys to its success.

The Rite[36]

It is best to perform this ritual when Saturn is in an auspicious celestial position, otherwise his negative influence may ruin the desired result of the ritual. First, kindle a small sacred fire before His shrine. Next, into the sacred fire, offer pieces of old leather, covered in grease and blood. When the fire has burned down, then gather the ashes. Smearing the ashes on your face and hands, you should bow low to Saturn's shrine, or else towards a black cube on black cloth or sand. As Saturn is a grim and sinister god, it is necessary to show great humility when asking Him for favors. Yet He is magnanimous, like all kings, and rewards displays of humility with great generosity. Recite the prayer below in a low tone.

> I address myself to Saturn, standing, I ask and I honor You with obedience and humility; I address Him, standing and facing the exalted

36 Adapted from *Nabataean Agriculture*, pp. 141-145.

master, alive and eternal, solid in His power and dominion. He is eternal in his heaven and mighty in His dominion, focused in His efforts and His great works. He is over all, His power is over all living things on earth, and they endure by His endurance. By His power and His might He began them, and He causes them to continue; He causes us to endure, and by His eternity and perpetuity, He brings permanence on earth. By His might, He causes the waters to ebb and flow. Living, He causes life to move, because He is himself alive.

He is cold, as is His nature. Through the influence of His high realm, the trees grow, and the earth becomes heavy under the weight of His movements; if He wishes, He causes beings to become what they are not. Yet He is wise and a creator by His might and intelligence; His Knowing extends to all things.

Hail, lord of the heavens, may Your name be holy, pure and honored. I obey You; I address myself to Your ancientness, I call You by Your names, Your ancientness, Your nobility and honor. I demand from You whom I respect to strengthen my mind, that it be strong and enduring and dwell in me while I live. Then when I die, ward off the worms and reptiles from my flesh. You are a merciful and ancient teacher, and no one can save the one You condemn. You are persistent in Your words and deeds, and You regret not Your acts. You are slow and profound in your powers. You are a master whose deeds cannot be undone, and what You forbid cannot be done by another. You are respected in all Your actions and unique in Your kingdom. You are the lord of the other planets, and the very stars fear the sound of your movement and tremble before Your gaze.

I ask and demand You to avert Your evil from me, and in Your purity, to treat me well. By Your good and noble names, I avert Your evil, and I draw from Your virtue. By Your names, by Your True Name which You love more than the others, treat me well and grant [NN].’

The Black Cube

This ritual has a very simple incantation, but the preparation is somewhat challenging. It requires the creation of a cube with an iron base, and the inscription of Saturnine names into the sides. A sacrifice is then made, and the magician can make his request. This spell does not summon Saturn directly, but rather draws on the power of His component souls.

The Rite[37]

To ask a specific need of Saturn you need to approach Him when the Sun descends to Capricorn's sign or the Moon is in Sagittarius.

- You make a cube (preferably of iron) and put on it colored clothes, green, black and red.[38]
- Inscribe the names *Tūs* (Top), *Khrūs* (Bottom), *Ciyūs* (Right), *Diriyūs* (Left), *Tamus* (Front), *Dorūs* (Back) on the Cube.
- Then take the cube to the desert under a fruitless tree. Alternatively, bring it to a desolate place with little vegetation. This could be an abandoned factory, or the wilderness, or a graveyard. You must

37 Adapted from Ouroboros *Picatrix* 3.9.

38 The clothes here is a reference to the *kiswa*, the tent-like covering of the Kaaba in Mecca.

bring a sacrifice of raw, bloody meat (preferably beef) and kindle a small sacred fire.[39]

- Then you say

  Brimas, Tos, Khroos, Kiyoos, Chardiyos, Tamoos, Rtyoos, Taheed, Seyrah, Mandool

  This means, "Come spirits, this is your sacrifice."
- You will now present the sacrifice to the cube and burn the meat, together with the hair of a black cat, and some carob, myrrh, and juniper.
- Then ask for what you desire.

■ ■ ■

39 The original rite asks to bring a calf or a cow as well as incense made of a black cats' brain, its guts, carob, myrrh, juniper. The sacrifice shall then be slaughtered as painlessly as possible and be presented to the cube.

The Rite of Chains

There are many rites by which one can connect to the Saturnine current; none are undertaken lightly, but some rites are *heavier* than others. Having practiced the previous rituals for no less than a year, and only if a magician feels a very strong affinity for the deity, he or she may wish to take steps to permanently bind themselves to the god. Such a choice must be pondered deeply as in order to become a true priest or priestess of the Saturnine deity, one must *freely surrender* one's own essence to the lord of chains. In other words, the magician must deliberately offer to the god his very soul, as well as his personal hopes and ambitions, as an act of sacrifice. The Saturnine deity will accept no lesser gift as the price of admission to His inner sanctum. One does not need to perform this ritual in order to practice the Saturnine cult, or Saturnine magic. This route must exclusively be taken by those who having tasted the bittersweet gnosis of the god, wish to bind themselves to the Black Cube, and to its eternal current. To the believers in the cycle of rebirth, this ritual creates karmic (or psychic) chains that cannot be broken, and commit the magician's future selves to the service of the god. It is one thing to sip from Saturn's black cup of gnosis – it is another to drain it to the dregs. If you have any doubts about performing this rite, then do not pursue it further. *Caveat cultor.*

Pre-Ritual Instructions

- The ritual should ideally be performed in winter, on a Saturn night during the waning moon. The magician must observe some form of rigorous self-restraint (like silence or fasting) for 24 hours prior to the rite.
- The magician should perform the rite in a stone (not wooden) chamber below ground, like a cellar or basement. Ventilation is important, as the ritual involves fire.
- The magician must wear black clothing, scissors, a neck-chain or wrist-chain of steel or iron, and three scraps of black leather. The black scraps of leather must be smeared ahead of time with the magician's blood, urine, and sexual fluids – this should be done the day before, so the leather and fluids are dried by the time of the ritual. The magician's name must be written or carved into the three scraps of leather.
- Three pieces of paper should also be prepared. The first has the name and family tree of the magician; the second contains an account of their most vivid memories; the third has a description of their hopes for the future.
- A black cup of red wine should be present, and should be bitter (not sweet) if possible.
- For this ritual, no shrine is needed. Instead, a small fire is kindled in a brazier facing west.
- The room should be censed with pungent incense prior to the ritual.

■ ■ ■

The Rite

The magician should begin the rite by bowing to the west, then kneeling or sitting before the sacred fire.

Incantation:

> Lord of the West, Who dwells beyond the darkness, hear my call. You who were there before the other gods, you who rule over the living and the dead, who bind all beings in chains and are lord of fate and time. You who some called Saturn, other Shani, and Zuhal, You who some call Ialdabaoth, and Kronos! Now I call you by a secret name, SONERO, which gods and demons fear to say. When your dwelling is in the nether world, you are lord over the dead. When your dwelling is in the night sky, you are lord over the stars. You are the master of destiny, and the gods go in fear of you. Sun, moon, and stars bow to your will, and so now do I also.

> Come, SONERO, from your cold throne. Come, lord of the black cube, and accept this sacrifice from your true daughter/son. To You, lord, I offer all.

Magician takes the first pieces of leather and paper and offers them into the fire. They imagine their soul/name/essence being consumed.

> Lord, I [name of magician] freely offer you my name, my being, my essence.

Magician takes the second pieces of leather and paper, and offers them into the fire. They imagine their past life, their memories, and their relationships being consumed by the fire.

> Father, I offer you my past, my memories, my victories and failures.

Magician takes the third pieces of leather and paper, and offers them into the fire. They imagine their possible future choices and chances being consumed.

> Master, I offer you my future, my dreams and hopes.

The magician takes the scissors, and cuts a small piece of his hair. This should be offered into the fire.

> My flesh and blood are yours to command. While you are bound to your throne, I shall be your ears and eyes. When you command, I shall serve as your hand in this world, according to your whim.

The magician takes the cup of bitter wine in both hands.

> Your truth is the only truth that I seek. With your eyes I will see, and with your ears will I hear. The past and present shall be known to me, for I am a priest/ess of the Saturnine deity. Speak to me, tell me your secrets.

The magician drains the cup to its dregs. Then, they should meditate on the Saturnine deity in whatever form seems best to them. If the ritual is performed correctly, they will receive gnosis directly from the god. This will be personal, and should not be shared. After the period of meditation and the reception of gnosis, the new priest/ess takes the chain and binds it on their neck or wrist, saying:

> Your chains have freed me from karma. By night, I have become the bearer of chaos into the world. By day, I have become a bringer of your new order. I have taken your chains upon myself, and shall go forth as an agent of the Black Throne.
>
> Be well, Lord and Father, and be pleased with me, now and always.

The magician should bow low to the west, and extinguish the flame. He should leave the chamber, bath, and retire for the night. Any dreams should be recorded, if possible, as they may be significant.

■ ■ ■

Concluding Remarks

With roots stretching back into antiquity, the Cult of the Black Cube has celebrated the Saturnine deity under many names and in many places. Even today we still acknowledge the living Saturnine traditions in India and within the Afro-Caribbean currents. I hope to have shown with this work that there is a very rich corpus of Saturnine rites and ceremonies recorded in medieval and classical texts, which provide a window into how many of the great cultures of the world understood this powerful deity. Saturn is feared, not only because He is a deity, or because of His association with death and the underworld, but because He represents the aspect of Chaos that remains within the cosmos. Chaos is depicted in many ancient creation myths, and it seems to serve two predominant roles.

First, Chaos is *life* – it is the generative, primordial darkness from which the cosmos emerges. Chaos is a kind of parent, even referred to as the "mother" of the Archons in some of the Gnostic traditions. Chaos is not inimical to life; but it is not alive or *aware* of life in the same sense that we (or even the gods) are. The generations of Chaos can be monstrous and dangerous, and give rise to stories about asuras, Titans, and other terrors that plague early civilization.

Second, Chaos is opposed by other spiritual powers, and demonized as a monster itself. This role is exemplified in Christian legends, which prophesy a coming final battle in which Chaos will return to war against Creation. The

cosmos is disturbed, and the earth groans with storms, earthquakes, even eclipses, all caused by the increasing intrusions of Chaos. Most of these legends predict a return of the very monsters that appeared in the earlier battles at the dawn of creation: dragons and demons break their adamantine chains – and so too, perhaps, the Saturnine deity. Whether or not such legends should be taken literally, it illustrates that there are other powers in the cosmos besides Chaos, and that these powers seek to limit and marginalize the cosmos as best they can.

Saturn as an agent or remnant of Chaos within the cosmos is opposed by the other gods but they cannot slay him. This leads to His exile but Saturn's godly prison is imperfect. His malefic influence remains perennial, and erupts at times to temporary riotous freedom, before it can be banished back into the black dimension symbolized by the cube.

The perceptive Saturnine acolyte sees the black deity not only as a god, but as a symbol of the Chaos which He embodies. In other words, the veneration of Saturn is the veneration of an extension of Chaos itself. The Saturnine path is a dark one, not because it is inherently bad or hateful, but because it is aligned with forces that are alien to most other spiritual currents. The Saturnine adept challenges the ruling powers of this aeon, just as the Saturnine Deity disrupts those powers in myth, and likewise in reality.

The dark deity has two essential goals, which form the mandate of the Saturnine cult. The first goal is to claim sovereignty, to conquer, to take back the celestial throne and then to restore the Saturnine kingdom ensuing in a state in which the world is again less differentiated from Chaos. Under Saturn's rule, humanity would be free of fear, grief, and loss, because it would achieve true equality through its newfound freedom from individuality and discrimination, in a never-ending Saturnalia.

The second, more far-reaching goal, is the eventual return of Chaos itself. The Saturnine kingdom may never return – there are no guarantees, and there are other spiritual powers that hold sovereignty, or would like to seize it. Yet the return of Chaos is prophesized, and when it comes, it may be for the last time. The Saturnine acolyte prepares for that day, by working to increase the influence of Saturn – and Chaos – at work in the world today.

On a personal level, the Saturnine current is very empowering. This path offers rites and devotional practices that lead to genuine gnosis, and to greater control of one's life and surroundings. This is an esoteric system that genuinely produces miracles – the medieval authors risked their lives (and reputations) to tell us as much. Devotion to the god of malefica brings resilience to many kinds of harm. Allegiance to the deity of restraint brings freedom from many of the esoteric and mundane shackles that bind others. Yet the Saturnine current is connected to the Saturnine cause, and anyone who genuinely seeks to enter the current will find that their ambitions and drives take a back seat to the greater will of the deity of the Black Cube. As Saturnine gnosis begins to build within an individual, one becomes an agent of Chaos, and that may bring with it a certain degree of unforeseen hardship. This sounds dramatic, but it is unavoidable, because the Saturnine path is part of an actual drama, an epic which is yet to be finished.

This book was written at the urging of the Black Cube, in the hopes that its content may be of use to others who feel drawn to the presence of this strange deity. Saturn offers you the chance to stand with Him while living, so that you may have a hand in shaping your own destiny. As Saturn is Himself an aspect of Chaos, He offers you the opportunity to allow Chaos to run rampant in your life, even if only for a little while. The Saturnine path is truly unique, because it brings genuine communion with a deity that is alien to this world, yet constrained by it. By making common cause with Saturn, you are allowing yourself a chance to actually *know* Him, and in serving Him, to serve yourself.

■ ***Redeunt Saturnia regna.*** ■

Selected annotated Bibliography of Saturnine Materials

The following section examines a selection of easily accessible primary and secondary sources that include details of the Saturnine deity and its cult particularities. A cursory examination of the list reveals how broadly the Saturnine deity was revered. It should be noted that this list is very much abbreviated, rather than exhaustive.

AZTEC

- **Guilhem Olivier. *Mockeries and Metamorphoses of an Aztec God: Tezcatlipoca, 'Lord of the Smoking Mirror'*. Trans. Michel Besson. University Press of Colorado, 2003.**

Olivier's work is the definitive study on the cult of Tezcatlipoca, the Aztec analog of the Saturnine deity. This volume contains myths, semiotics, and cultic practices which are adaptable for the contemporary practitioner of the Meso-American current of the Black Cube. Despite the general disappearance of much of the Meso-American culture, Tezcatlipoca's cult continues today to be a popular force in contemporary occultism. This study is especially important,

because it examines a culture which exalts the Saturnine deity as paramount, rather than attempting to revere yet restrain the deity, as in Roman culture.

- **Elizabeth Baquedano. *Tezcatlipoca: Trickster and Supreme Deity*, University Press of Colorado, 2014.**

Baquedano's work is an absolute must, as it builds on the foundation of the work by Olivier, but considers the last decade's worth of research, and most significantly, it weighs all through the lens of archeology and material culture. Considering ritual, sacrificial, and burial items, Baquedano is able to construct a more complete understanding of the Saturnine cult than has been previously possible.

- **Marc G. Blainey. 'Techniques of Luminosity: Iron-Ore Mirrors and Entheogenic Shamanism among the Ancient Maya.' In *Manufactured Light: Mirrors in the Mesoamerican Realm* (edited by Emiliano Gallaga M. and Marc G. Blainey), pp. 179-206. Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2016.**

This article explains some of the spiritual and scrying practices of the Tezcatlipoca cult (among others). It details the use of iron mirrors, as well as the use of entheogens as part of the shamanic experience. This article is especially useful for those who intend to make use of mirrors as part of the spiritual scrying and astral projection practices.

CLASSICAL / MEDIEVAL

- **Betz. *The Greek Magical Papyri*. Greek and Demotic, circa 5th century CE, Egypt.**

The Greek Magical Papyri (*Papyri Graecae Magicae* or PGM) need little introduction for the literate occultist. A collection of primarily Greek and Demotic texts, the PGM is a thorough Hellenistic series of spells, prayers, and rituals, which provides the basis for what is considered the Hermetic tradition. A blend of Jewish, early Christian, Hellenistic (Greco-Roman), Egyptian, and other traditions from antiquity, the PGM collection is diverse in its content and dating, as

it contains materials from as early as the second century BCE, to as late as the 5th century CE. While the Satunine deity is not prevalent in this corpus, Cronos appears in several incantations, most noticeably an oracle rite that is said to summon the Titan himself.

- **Macrobius. *The Saturnalia.* Latin, 5th century CE, Rome.**

Macrobius Ambrosius Theodosius was a fifth century Roman writer, whose work *Saturnalia* tells us much of what we understand around the practices of the Saturnalia festival, which begins on 17 December. He describes the strange practices of the festival, focusing on the positive chaotic aspects, the reversal of roles, and customs relevant to its correct celebration. Through Macrobius, we understand also some of the larger cult of Saturn, and his worship in the pre-Republic period. At the time of writing, his works are not yet available in English, and require Latin.

- **H. S. Versnel, *Transition and Reversal in Myth and Ritual. Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman Religion II.* Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1993.**

Versnel's pioneering work on the Greco-Roman's cults of Cronos and Saturn is absolutely fundamental to the contemporary cult of the Black Cube. It discusses interpretation of myth, and the cultic and sacerdotal practices of the cult of the Saturnine deity. One of the salient details of this volume is that while other studies often assume that Cronos = Saturn and therefore separate discussion is unnecessary, Vernel wisely acknowledges the distinction between Cronos and Saturn, and treats each 'persona' of the deity as unique. The Saturnalia and the Cronia are even treated in separate chapters. This is not to say that the author does not recognize the cultic connections or borrowing, but that he understands that Roman religion was distinct from Greek religion, despite the evident borrowings which took place. This work is also important as it does not shy away from some of the darker, chthonic aspects of the Saturnine deity, and explores (for example) the bloodier sacrificial aspects of the 'fearful and even horrible god.' Finally, Versnel discusses the Roman spouse of Saturn, Mater Lua ('Mother Destruction'), who often receives little attention despite her relatively sinister character.

- **Richard Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites: A Necromancer's Manual of the Fifteenth Century*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998.**

This work is a solid academic overview of a wide range of medieval magic, from diverse sources (eastern and western). It includes several examples of medieval Saturnine magical operations, which give some insight into how Saturn was perceived by the practicing medieval European magician. This text tends towards what practitioners at that time would have considered 'black magic,' as it antedates the modern understanding and discussion of Right Hand Path/Left Hand Path (RHP/LHP) which has become common parlance in western esoteric tradition.

INDIAN

- **David Knipe, "Softening the Cruelty of God: Folklore, Ritual, and the Planet Śani (Saturn) in Southeast India," in *Studies in South Indian Civilization in Honour of Velcheru Narayana Rao*. Ed. David Shulman. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995.**

This essay provides a very good overview of contemporary popular devotion to Saturn (Śani) in South Asia, and is especially good at understanding how such an overtly malefic deity is rehabilitated in the popular consciousness. The essay provides a very good introduction to the dating of the navagraha cult as far back as the Vedic period. The essay explores the major contemporary folk beliefs about Saturn, such as his fearsome nature, his generally negative influence, the duration of his overshadowing (in years), the positive aspects of the trauma He inflicts, and the means by which his black gaze can be mitigated.

- **Robert Svoboda. *The Greatness of Saturn: A Therapeutic Myth*. Lotus Press: 1997**

This short book is Dr. Robert Svoboda's work on Lord Śani, the Vedic equivalent of Saturn. Better known for his work on the Aghora sect of India, Svoboda here explores and adapts some of the traditional Saturnine legends for a Western audience. As a master jyotisha (astrologer), Svoboda is concerned

with Śani principally as one of the *navagraha* or 'astral seizers', and that is the lens through which Saturn is explored in this book. Svoboda is not concerned with describing the ancient Saturnine cults, as he is a practitioner and yogi rather than a historian. Nevertheless, he includes some very practical notes for how to incorporate Saturnine devotion into one's spiritual routine. It is good to note that in this work Svoboda explòres the concept of Saturn as the principle of *restraint*, which corresponds very nicely to the Western imagery of Saturn as 'the chained god.'

- **Charles Burnett. 'Remarques Paléographiques et Philologiques sur les noms d'anges et d'esprits dans les traités de magie traduits de l'arabe en latin' in *Mélanges de l'Ecole francaise de Rome,* Tome 114 (2002).**

This brief pamphlet is largely unknown, yet very significant for its combination of Arabic, Indian, and Latin themes. Its principal value is the transmission of some alleged Saturnine tradition from India, together with a detailed list of the 72 'spirits' of Saturn in Arabic and Latin texts. Burnett in turns cites the Arabic *Kitab al-Ustuwwatas* and *Kitab al-Istimatis* manuscripts as texts containing Saturnine materials. While the scripts involved are Arabic and Latin, the transmission is clearly Indian in origin.

ISLAMIC

- **Pseudo Al-Majriti. *Ghayat al Hakim* ('The Aim of the Sage') / *The Picatrix* (Latin title). Arabic, circa 11th century CE, Andalusia.**

The *Ghayat al Hakim* (Arabic for 'Aim of the Sage') is a well-attested text from 10th/11th century Andalusia. It was composed in Arabic, and later translated into Spanish and Latin as *The Picatrix.* It is among the best known Islamic esoteric texts in the Western world. The author, sometimes referred to as Pseudo Al-Majriti, presents the text as applied 'philosophy,' and it contains a sizable transmission of astrological and talismanic lore, which has been traced ultimately to Harran (Turkey), and contains practices that are Hermetic/Hellenistic, Sabian, Nabataean, and even Indian. While *The Picatrix* is sometimes cited as the definitive work on Arab astrology, it is important to note that

its fame in Islamic countries was relatively minor when compared with better known works like the *Shams ul-Ma'arifa*. *The Picatrix* is an excellent source on ancient and medieval Saturnine practices in the Muslim world and beyond, as the author includes a very generous range of Saturnine practices and anecdotes on the various names, attributes, powers, and cultic practices specific to Zuhal.

- **Abu Bakr Ibn Wahshiyya. *Filaha al-Nabatiyya* ('Nabataean Agriculture'). Arabic, circa 9th century CE, Iraq.**

Nabataean Agriculture was a work penned by the ninth century CE author Abu Bakr A'mad bin Ali al-Nabati, an Iraqi scholar and mystic. Ibn Wahshiyya's works have not been fully translated into English, and require reading knowledge of Arabic. He was something of a polymath, and wrote about alchemy, poisoning, history, linguistics, and the ancient agricultural and spiritual practices of the pre-Islamic peoples of Mesopotamia. Ibn Wahshiyya's work *Nabataen Agriculture* does indeed cover some facets of farming, but also includes several very detailed prayers and cult practices of Zuhal. Ibn Wahshiyya's notes are, in fact, so highly detailed that they indicate that he himself practiced the cultic rites of the Saturnine deity, though he takes pains to inform the reader that he includes such instructions 'only for posterity.' The *Nabataean Agriculture* was in turn one of several sources for the anonymous author of the *Ghayat al Hakim*.

- **Anon. *Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa* ('Epistles of the Brethren of Purity'). Arabic, circa 10th century CE, Iraq.**

The *Epistles* form 52 separate books, and are sometimes rightly referred to as an encyclopedia. They are the works of an elite Muslim intellectual society, which appears to have embraced a very wide range of views that included Hermetic, Ismaili, Sufi, and Neo-Platonic ideologies. When we describe them as 'Muslim,' we mean largely that their members would have publicly self-identified as Muslims, and that the movement's members were living in predominantly Muslim territory. This said, a thorough study of their works (the *Epistles* most notably) indicates some esoteric views that would have been heterodox

and illegal by both Sunni and Shi'a standards. Additionally, the *Epistles* (specifically volume 52) include some cult practices of Zuhal, as well as the initiation rites of a chthonic cult that worshipped an entity known as the Demogorgon (Arabic 'Girgis'). These have been partially translated into English, and Oxford is completing a complete bilingual edition.

INTERNATIONAL

- **Samuel Macey. *Patriarchs of Time: Dualism in Saturn-Cronus, Father Time, the Watchmaker God, and Father Christmas.* Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987.**

This volume is useful for several reasons. First, it explores the Saturn-Cronus figure as the god (or aeon) of time, which is one of the principal aspects of the deity. Secondly, it examines how those cultural aspects have survived in different, more benevolent guises, such as Father Time and (unexpectedly) Santa Claus. The value of this text is that it demonstrates how the mimetic aspect of a deity may visibly survive through several cultural shifts, without diminishing its popularity or influence. Macey's work is less useful as a practical text, and provides more understanding of the deity than (say) its cult or practices.

■ ■ ■

Appendix One

The Names of the 72 Spirits[40]

	Arabic Version	Latin Version
1	Hamudias	Dahmodyez
2	Ahudyias	Ahuynornez
3	Waflidus	Vacalayduz
4	Dilas	Daylez
5	Sorias	Cayorz
6	Halabras	Hayraz
7	Masudias	Maoydez
8	Falidus	Lacayduz
9	Sa'ilas	Machyes
10	Dahadrus	Dahtaz
11	Kakalus	Caydelelyz
12	Saryuyas	Maypayonez
13	Darsidus	Daryalyduz
14	Hafilus	Hayfayles

40 Adapted from Burnett (See above, p. 163).

	Arabic Version	Latin Version
15	Dabadlus	Dandulez
16	Armahus	Almahez
17	Ilmadus	Calamyches
18	Hilwas	Mayrez
19	Bilwas	Nahcarez
20	Awkrandus	Aochuidoz
21	Kayarus	missing
22	Suwindas	Caydemoz
23	Samas	missing
24	Sanmaras	Caylemaraz
25	Dahadurus	missing
26	Hawas	Hadez
27	Hnrus	Hayfar
28	Siras	Caynaraz
29	Mantanuros	Cafyoraz
30	Zarnuwas	Caryonaz
31	Hisaras	missing
32	Madus	missing
33	Ablamus	missing
34	Farmanos	missing
35	Habandamus	missing
36	Faknawus	Faynaderaz
37	Aumras	missing
38	Sadurus	Maydoraz
39	Mandurus	Mayderanoz
40	Hahwaz	Hagraz
41	Hadrus	Henaz
42	Andurus	Ghearaz
43	Hahahrus	Barharaz

	Arabic Version	Latin Version
44	Barnus	missing
45	Habaras	Hayneroz
46	Manuraz	missing
47	Amdimimas	Ahdemoz
48	Darayuz	Darayuz
49	Dahamaz	Dehomez
50	Baryouraz	Bachyoraz
51	Hafis	Henyez
52	Manahis	missing
53	Karluwas	Cartaraz
54	Dardus	Voardoraz
55	Hahharus	Beyahranyoz
56	Dandaras	Candaraz
57	Lamdaras	missing
58	Admaras	missing
59	Armuras	Omeraz
60	Aduryanus	Adryemys
61	Akarnamus	Accamyz
62	Warnarus	missing
63	Malias	Camylyez
64	Dahadrus	Dachraras
65	Kadras	Quedaz
66	Rakhanas	Camurdaz
67	Dahalias	Dahalyez
68	Arorias	Aaradyez
69	Haruras	Haramyez
70	Arnuhas	missing
71	Mohas	missing
72	Msahas	Mayheuz

Appendix Two

Number Of Hours

The following chart provides the number of hours

Day of the Week	Hours after Sunrise/Sunset
Saturday	1 + 8
Sunday	5 + 12
Monday	2 + 9
Tuesday	6
Wednesday	3 + 10
Thursday	7
Friday	4 + 11

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- P. 18, the Black Cube, original artwork by Erica Frevel for this publication. Acrylic paint, fermented blood and consecrated ink on maple hardwood panel - 16 by 20 inches.
- P. 66, Saturnus-Malakbel, Detail. Grande galerie du Tabularium - Musei Capitolini. Image taken by Jean-Pol Grandmont. Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:0_Autel_dédié_au_dieu_Malakbêl_et_aux_dieux_de_Palmyra_-_Musei_Capitolini_(1b).JPG
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- P. 85, Śani, Graha. 1842. Image from *The complete Hindoo Pantheon, comprising the principal deities worshipped by the Natives of British India*

throughout Hindoostan by E. A. Rodrigues. Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Śani_graha.JPG

- P. 111, Logo/Sigil of the Fraternitas Saturni. Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:FraternitasSaturniSiegel.svg
- P. 118, Saturn. Engraving, 1597, by Jacob Matham after Hendrik Goltzius. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C. Source: https://www.artsy.net/artwork/jacob-matham-after-hendrik-goltzius-saturn

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